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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-024 *5 February 1996*

CONTENTS

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Inter-Arab Affairs

Syria Asks Arab League To Discuss Water Dispute With Turkey *[MENA]* 1
Syrian, Iraqi Experts To Meet To Discuss Water Issue 10 Feb *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 5 Feb]* 1
Condition of Palestinian Deportees' on Libyan Border Said 'Very Bad' *[MENA]* 1

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Executive Committee To Meet in Egypt *[Jericho VOP]* 1
DFLP, PFLP To Boycott PLO Executive Committee Meeting *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 1
PLO's 'Arafat Reiterates Promise To Amend Covenant *[Jerusalem Radio]* 2
PLO's al-Najjab Calls For New National Charter *[Jericho VOP]* 2
PLO To Weigh Compromise Agreement on Charter *[AFP]* 2
Palestinian Security Forces Kill 2 Islamic Jihad 'Terrorist' Suspects *[Jerusalem Radio]* 3
Islamic Jihad: Gaza Killings 'Cold-Blooded Murder' *[AFP]* 3
Palestinian Islamic Jihad Pledges Revenge for Killings *[AFP]* 3
Palestinian Council Member 'Urayqat on Jerusalem, Future *[Cairo Radio]* 4
PLO's Qaddumi on Return to Territories *[AL-DUSTUR 4 Feb]* 4
DFLP Leader on Return, Palestinian Opposition Presence in Syria *[AL-DUSTUR 3 Feb]* 6

Arab-Israeli Talks

'Arafat, Peres Meet in Davos, Discuss Prisoners, Elections *[Jericho VOP]* 7
Peres, 'Arafat Meet in Davos on Prisoners, Amending Charter *[Jerusalem Radio]* 8

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Algerian 'Source' Denies Rumors About Release of FIS Leader *[Algiers Radio]* 9

Egypt

Egyptian FM Musa Views Peres' Remarks on Jerusalem, Syrian Talks *[MENA]* 9
Egypt's Musa Rejects IDF Claims of 'Hindering' Ties *[Jerusalem Radio]* 9
Egypt's Musa Urges Sudan To Cooperate With UN Security Council *[MENA]* 10
Egyptian Consultative Council Urges Sudan To Comply With UN Resolution *[MENA]* 10
Cairo Paper Urges Sudan's Compliance With UN Resolution *[MENA]* 11
Cairo Daily Warns Sudan of Possible Sanctions *[MENA]* 11
Cairo Paper: Sudanese Leaders' Days in Power 'Numbered' *[MENA]* 12
PLO Leader 'Arafat Arrives in Cairo *[MENA]* 12
Mubarak-King Husayn Cairo Summit in 'Next Few Days' *[MENA]* 12
Egyptian Opposition Newspapers Editors To Be Tried for Slander *[AFP]* 12

Sudan

Sudanese Official Criticizes U.S. Withdrawal of Envoys *[SUNA]* 13

Sudanese Opposition Figure Views Sanctions, U.S. Withdrawal of Envoys *[Cairo Radio]* 13
Sudanese Official Urges End of U.S. Ties, Embassy Closure *[AFP]* 14
Wider Implications of Security Council Ruling on Sudan Seen *[London AL-HAYAH 2 Feb]* .. 15
Sudan: Ethiopian Evidence on Mubarak Assassination Bid Said Weak *[SUNA]* 15
'Specific' Threats Said Behind U.S. Pullout From Sudan Capital *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 4 Feb]* 16
Sudanese Paper on Call To Form Commission on Terrorism Charges *[AFP]* 16
Exiled Sudanese Group Supports Anti-Sudan UN Resolution *[Cairo Radio]* 16

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

New Arson, Sabotage Activities, Arrests Reported in Bahrain *[MENA]* 17
Bahraini Ministry Statement Details Sabotage, Arrests *[KUNA]* 17
'Subversive Acts' Continue in Bahrain; 40 Arrested *[SPA]* 17
Bahrain Paper Warns Against Renewing 'Reckless Acts' *[WAKH]* 18

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Ministry Denies Minister's Alleged Remarks on Iraq *[KUNA]* 18
Kuwaiti Assembly Members Blame Government for Economic Situation *[ARAB TIMES 26 Jan]* 19

Saudi Arabia

Daily Gives Details on Saudi National Extradited by Pakistan *[London AL-HAYAH 5 Feb]* 20
More Information on Saudi National Extradited by Pakistan *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 5 Feb]* 20
Saudi Arabia's King Fahd Donates 10 Million Riyals to Bosnia *[SPA]* 20

Yemen

Kidnappers of French Tourists Arrested, Leader Killed in Yemen *[Sanaa Radio]* 21
Yemen's Salih Dismisses Officers for Failing To Perform Duties *[Sanaa Radio]* 21
Yemen Denies Preparing for War Over Disputed Island *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 22
Yemen's Salih Discusses Mediation Efforts With French Envoy *[Sanaa Radio]* 22
Yemen's Al-Iryani Discusses Eritrean Crisis With U.S. Officials *[Sanaa Radio]* 22

IRAQ

'Udayy's 'Speech' Said Cause of Iraq TV Transmission Halt *[AL-URDUN 5 Feb]* 23
Husayn Kamil Reportedly Retires From Politics *[MENA]* 23
Senior Iraqi Army Officers Said Arrested Before Reaching Jordan *[Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution]* 23
UN Official on Preparations for Iraqi Oil-for-Food Talks *[Baghdad TV]* 23
Iraqi Paper Calls Oil-for-Food Step Toward Lifting Embargo *[INA]* 24
Iraq To Grant 'Great Facilities' to Trade Ships *[INA]* 24
Two Iraqi Oil Tankers Said Prepared To Supply Ships With Fuel *[INA]* 24
Iraq Not To Interfere To Stop Dollar 'Decline' *[Baghdad TV]* 24
Iraqi Finance Minister Denies Intention To 'Revive' Dollar *[Baghdad TV]* 25
Baghdad TV Reports Improved Dinar Exchange Rates, Lower Prices 25
Iraqi State Enterprise Reduces Dairy Product Prices *[Bahdad TV]* 26
Iraq: PUK's Talabani Views Dialogue, Peace with KDP *[Voice of the People]* 26

ISRAEL

Israel's Peres on Syria Talks, Early Elections *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 27

Israel's Beilin: No Peace Without Compromise on Crucial Issues *[Jerusalem Radio]* 28
Israeli Officials Comment on Syrian Talks, Christopher Visit *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 4 Feb]* 28
Israeli Economic Plan for Peace With Syria Detailed *[HA'ARETZ 5 Feb]* 29
Israel's Peres Not To Decide on Elections Before 15 Feb *[Jerusalem Radio]* 30
Israeli Sources: Peres Decided on Elections, Seeks 'Justification' *[HA'ARETZ 2 Feb]* 31
Israeli Officials Believe Early Elections To Facilitate Syria Talks *[Jerusalem Radio]* 31
'Senior' Israeli Sources Note Reasons for Holding Early Elections *[Jerusalem Radio]* 32
Israel's Likud, Tzomet Agree To Form 'Joint List' in Elections *[Jerusalem TV]* 32
Israel's Shin Bet Captures Islamic Jihad 'Terrorist' *[Jerusalem Radio]* 33
U.S. Ambassador to Israel Attends Tour of Gaza Checkpoints *[DAVAR RISHON 4 Feb]* 33
Column: Israel Seeks U.S.-Mediated 'Taba-Like' Accord With Syria *[HA'ARETZ 5 Feb]* 33

JORDAN

Jordanian Minister Denies Government Resignation Reports *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 2 Feb]* 35
Advisers to Jordan's King Husayn Resign *[Amman Radio]* 35
'Text' of Al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir's Letter of Resignation *[Amman Radio]* 35
'Text' of King Husayn's Letter to Outgoing Prime Minister *[Amman Radio]* 36
'Last Minute Hitches' Delay Appointment of Jordan's al-Kabariti *[JORDAN TIMES 4 Feb]* 36
Jordan's Al-Kabariti Forms 31-Member Cabinet *[Amman TV]* 37
Al-Battikhi Appointed General Intelligence Director *[Amman TV]* 38
Former Jordanian Intelligence Chief Appointed as King's Adviser *[Amman Radio]* 38
Islamists To Withold Confidence For New Jordanian Government *[JORDAN TIMES 4 Feb]* 38
Jordanian Envoy in Baghdad Reportedly Suffers 'Harassment' *[THE STAR 7 Feb]* 39
Daily Reports Israel Expelled Iranian 'Spy' to Jordan *[JORDAN TIMES 3 Feb]* 39

LEBANON

Hizballah Commentary Sees Christopher Tour Set To Fail *[Voice of the Oppressed]* 41
Hizballah Leader in Lebanon Calls On U.S. Envoy To Apologize *[Voice of the Oppressed]* 41
Lebanon's Fadlallah Condemns UN Resolution on Sudan, U.S. Role *[Tehran International]* 41
Lebanon's 'Awn Announces Decision To Take Part in Elections *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 2 Feb]* 42
Israeli Shelling, Lebanese 'Resistance' Attack Reported *[Beirut Radio]* 42
Islamic Resistance Reportedly Attacks Israeli Position *[Voice of the Oppressed]* 42
Amal Claims Attacks on Positions in South Lebanon *[Beirut Radio]* 43
'Terrorists' Shell Lebanese Village in Security Zone *[Voice of the South]* 43
Lebanese Hizballah Shelling Kills Woman, Wounds Another *[Voice of the South]* 43

SYRIA

'Official Syrian Source' Confirms 'Failure' of Maryland Talks *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 44
Syrian Official: Gap at Israel-Syria Peace Talks Widening *[AFP]* 44
Syrian Sources Hope Christopher Will 'Bridge Gaps' With Israel *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 44
Syrian Papers Discuss Christopher's Upcoming Trip *[Damascus Radio]* 45
Damascus Radio: Talks Resumption Hinge on Christopher's Stands 46
Syrian Press Blames Israel for Lack of Progress at Wye Talks *[Damascus Radio]* 47

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghan Government Holds Talks With Opposition in Jalalabad *[Message of Freedom]* 48
Afghan High State Council, President Discuss Peace Talks *[Kabul Radio]* 48
Afghan Radio Says Iran Hosts Pro-Rabbani Camp *[Message of Freedom]* 48

Taleban Spokesman Confirms Bombing of Kabul *[Message of Freedom]* 48
Taleban Commander Killed by Mine Explosion Near Kabul *[Message of Freedom]* 48
Taleban Rockets Kill 2 in Kabul *[Kabul Radio]* 49
Taleban Mortar Fire Wounds 3 in Kabul *[Kabul Radio]* 49
Taleban Reportedly Kills Prayer Leader in Logar *[Kabul Radio]* 49
Afghan Presidential Palace Damaged in Rocket Attack *[AFP]* 49
Afghan Radio Reports Commander Killed by Rival *[Message of Freedom]* 49
Afghanistan: Shura-e Nezar Commander Reportedly Surrenders to HCC *[Message of Freedom]* 50

Bangladesh

Bangladesh 'Rocked' by Bomb Blasts; Election Violence Continues *[AFP]* 50
Strike Called by Bangladesh Opposition Parties Observed 'Peacefully' *[Dhaka Radio]* 50

India

Indian Official Reveals Plan To Export Heavy Water to South Korea *[Delhi Radio]* 51
Indian Minister Views Missile Program, Skirmishes With Pakistan *[Delhi Radio]* 51
Indian 'Countermeasures' to Pakistan's Arms Acquisition Noted *[THE TIMES OF INDIA 2 Feb]* 51
India Objects to Pakistani President's 'Discourtesy' *[Delhi Radio]* 52
Indian Article Claims U.S. Seeks 'Schism' in Indo-Iranian Ties *[INDIAN EXPRESS 2 Feb]* .. 52
Indian Official Favors Kashmir Elections, Discusses Hostages *[Delhi Radio]* 53
Indian Minister Concludes Talks With Parties on Kashmir Elections *[Delhi Radio]* 53
India: Troops Said To Destroy House of Kashmiri Leader *[Islamabad Radio]* 54
India Orders Bail for Arms Dropping Suspects; Latvians Remanded *[Delhi Radio]* 54

Iran

Iranian Commentary Denies Reported Fire at Esfahan Nuclear Center *[Tehran International]* 54
Iranian Paper Sees Dollar Forging Accusation as 'Propaganda Ploy' *[IRNA]* 55
Iranian Commentary: U.S. Diplomacy in Bosnia on 'Verge of Collapse' *[Tehran International]* 55
Iranian Commentary: France Seeks Bigger Role in NATO; U.S. Opposed *[Tehran International]* 55
Iran's Larijani on Changes in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain *[Tehran TV]* 56
Iranian Dailies Say Bahrain Should Not Blame Unrest on Others *[IRNA]* 58
Iran's Khamene'i Meets With Election Officials, Issues Guidelines *[Tehran TV]* 59
Jannati Discusses Majles Elections in Sermon *[Tehran Radio]* 59
Iran's Nature of Election Participation Discussed *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 24 Jan]* 61
Iranian Education Minister Says Group of 16 Not Political Party *[IRNA]* 62

Pakistan

Pakistani Defense Minister Rules Out Chance of War With India *[Islamabad Radio]* 63
Pakistani Minister Warns of 'Countermeasures' to Indian Missile Test *[Islamabad Radio]* 63
Pakistani Spokesman, Minister Voice Concern Over Indian Missiles *[Islamabad Radio]* 63
Pakistan Extradites Saudi for Alleged Role in Blast at U.S. Office *[AFP]* 63
Pakistani Defense Minister Welcomes Passage of Brown Amendment *[Islamabad Radio]* 64
Pakistani Spokesman Speaks on F-16's, Mirage-2000 Aircraft *[Islamabad Radio]* 64
Pakistani Prime Minister Addresses Nation on Kashmir *[Islamabad TV]* 64

Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan President Stresses 'Democratic Society' on National Day *[Colombo International* 66
LTTE Dispatch Reports Bomb Attack in Sri Lanka; No Responsibility Claim *[Tamil Eelam News WWW 3] Jan]* 67

LTTE Unconfirmed Report: 'Ellalan Force' Caused Blast in Sri Lanka *[Tamil Eelam News WWW 1 Feb]* 67
Sri Lankan 'Police Sources' Implicate LTTE Figure in Bomb Attack *[DAILY NEWS 3 Feb]* .. 68
Sri Lankan Minister: Bombing Shows Need To Defeat LTTE *[DAILY NEWS 3 Feb]* 69
Sri Lankan Government Appoints Team To Rebuild Bombed Area *[Colombo International]* . 69
Sri Lanka: Bomb Recovery Continues; Additional Suspects Detained *[Colombo International]* 69
Sri Lankan Government Troops Reportedly Kill 15 LTTE Members in Jaffna *[DAILY NEWS 2 Feb]* 70
LTTE Claims Victory Over Sri Lankan Government Troops in East *[Tamil Eelam News WWW]* 70

Inter-Arab Affairs

Syria Asks Arab League To Discuss Water Dispute With Turkey

NC0402213096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2045 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Feb (MENA)—Syria has submitted an official memorandum to the Arab League asking for the inclusion of the issue of the Euphrates River water and the measures being taken by the Turkish Government on the agenda of the next ordinary session of the Arab League Council scheduled to be held at the foreign ministerial level on 13 March.

Syria warns in its memorandum of the danger of the measures being taken by the Turkish Government regarding the Euphrates River since the signing of a contract to build a dam on Lake (Kap) and the problem of polluted water being dumped into the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers without consulting the other countries that share the two rivers' water.

Informed sources here today confirmed the report of a meeting by experts from Syria and Iraq in Damascus on 10 February to discuss this issue, since those two countries share the Euphrates River water.

Iraq and Syria have periodic meetings that also involve Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan within the framework of the project to link these countries' electricity grid. These countries' energy ministers are scheduled to meet in Damascus in March.

Syrian, Iraqi Experts To Meet To Discuss Water Issue 10 Feb

MM0502111896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 5 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Syrian-Iraqi Meeting To Coordinate Over Water Problem"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Syrian and Iraqi experts will meet in Damascus next Saturday [10 February] to discuss the two countries' rights to Tigris and Euphrates waters. Informed sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the meeting is designed to coordinate stands in this connection. It is the first of its kind to be held at this stage, especially after the recent Turkish stands.

The sources added that the meeting's importance stems from the fact that it will be held within the framework of the Arab interest, especially the Arab League's interest, in the issue. Coordinating Syrian-Iraqi stands represents a step toward holding talks with Turkey on the water issue. [passage omitted]

Condition of Palestinian Deportees' on Libyan Border Said 'Very Bad'

NC0202181496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1710 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Sallum, 2 Feb (MENA)—Panos Motneris [name as transliterated], representative of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, has described the living and psychological conditions of Palestinians in the deportees' camp on the Egyptian-Libyan border as very bad. He said some of the deportees have reached the point of absolute collapse. He added that they have lost the desire to live and prefer death over the hard life they are suffering and their severe predicament.

Meanwhile, a quarrel broke out among the camps' Palestinian deportees over accepting medicine from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency office in the Gaza Strip during a visit to the camp yesterday. It developed into a fist fight in which five people suffered minor injuries.

The Palestinians split into two factions, one advocating accepting the medicine and the other opposing it. A clash ensued in which fists and stones were used.

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Executive Committee To Meet in Egypt

JN0402154096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the chairmanship of President Yasir 'Arafat, the PLO Executive Committee will tomorrow meet in the Egyptian town of al-'Arish. The Committee members will discuss developments on the Palestinian arena in the light of the successful Palestinian legislative and presidential elections, the convening of the Palestine National Council, and the approaching date to start the final phase negotiations on the Palestinian territory.

DFLP, PFLP To Boycott PLO Executive Committee Meeting

JN0302190896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] today decided to boycott the meeting of the PLO Executive Committee to be held in al-'Arish in Egypt on 5 February to call for the convening of the Palestine National Council [PNC] to amend the Palestinian National Charter. In a statement distributed in Damascus, Taysir Khalid, DFLP representative in the PLO Executive Committee,

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said that he will boycott the al-'Arish meeting because the Palestinian National Authority officials use the PLO Executive Committee to peddle the agreements concluded with Israel and to deceive public opinion. The DFLP also said that the representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] will also boycott the meeting.

Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat pledged, during the signing of the self-rule agreements, to cancel the National Charter articles calling for the destruction of the State of Israel. The Charter can only be amended with the approval of two thirds of the PNC members.

PLO's 'Arafat Reiterates Promise To Amend Covenant

TA0402194296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat has reiterated his promise that the Palestinian National Covenant will be amended in the near future after Israel permits all members of the Palestine National Council [PNC] to meet in the territories. 'Arafat explained that the PNC would endorse the amendments already made in 1974, 1988, and 1991.

Speaking in Davos to our correspondent Gid'on Kouts, 'Arafat expressed the view that the negotiations on the permanent arrangements should not be put off until after the Israeli elections, if these are brought forward — this, in light of statements he has heard from Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

'Arafat said the agreement with Israel stipulates that discussions on the Jerusalem issue should start as early as possible and no later than the beginning of the third year after the Oslo agreement. The settlement question will also be discussed when negotiations start on the permanent arrangement in May 1996.

PLO's al-Najjab Calls For New National Charter

JN0402154296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sulayman al-Najjab, PLO Executive Committee member, called for a new Palestinian national charter that calls for establishing an independent, sovereign Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem.

Al-Najjab added: The new charter must underline that the Palestinian state will be a democratic secular state.

PLO To Weigh Compromise Agreement on Charter

NC0402173396 Paris AFP in English 1638 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Report by Ben Lynfield]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, Feb 4 (AFP) — The PLO Executive Committee will consider compromise proposals Monday [5 February] designed to satisfy Israeli demands for changes to the Palestinian charter without antagonizing Palestinian hardliners, a committee member said Sunday.

Under peace agreements signed by PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat and Israel, the Palestinian side promised to remove references to the destruction of Israel from the 1968 covenant of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The charter can only be changed by a two-thirds vote of the PLO parliament, the Palestine National Council (PNC), but opposition to removing the offending references without further concessions from Israel remains strong.

Sulayman al-Najjab, one of the 16 members of the PLO executive committee, told AFP on Sunday that he would submit a compromise proposal on the charter at the meeting of the panel in al-'Arish, Egypt, across the border from Gaza.

The meeting is expected to last two days.

Under al-Najjab's proposal, the PNC would adopt a new charter recognizing Israel to replace the existing document, avoiding a divisive vote on the anti-Israeli articles of the covenant.

He said the new document would declare that the Palestinian aim is an independent state with sovereignty in east Jerusalem and demand that Israel's presence be completely removed from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"To have a new charter is a Palestinian national need rather than an Israeli order," al-Najjab said.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan rejected the compromise idea.

"Israel's stand is that 'Arafat must revoke the relevant articles referring to the destruction of Israel and not simply write a new charter," he said Sunday.

"This is a test of the Palestinians' credibility," he said.

Opposition within the PNC to revoking the existing PLO Charter remains strong both among hardliners opposed to the peace process with Israel and among moderates who say Israel needs to make more concessions first.

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Several leading PNC members said last week that they specifically wanted more from Israel in terms of releasing Palestinian prisoners, permitting refugees to return home and clarifying the status of Arabs in east Jerusalem.

A senior PLO Executive Committee member and opponent of the autonomy accords, Faruq Qaddumi, reiterated in an interview published Sunday in Tunis that he opposed any change to the charter, which he called an "historic national document."

The Executive Committee, the PLO's highest organ, needs a majority vote to call a special session of the 630-member PNC to change the charter.

Under the peace accords, the PNC must meet within two months of the inaugural session of the Palestinian legislature elected last month from the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem.

Palestinian officials have said the legislature will meet after the Moslem holy month of Ramadan which ends in late February.

Mahmud 'Abbas, another executive committee member, told AFP the PNC session would take place before the deadline, predicting it would be "within two months" of the al-'Arish meeting.

Monday's talks will be the first meeting of the committee since 'Arafat bolstered his position by scoring a clear victory in the presidential and legislative elections.

Jamal al-Surani, secretary-general of the Executive Committee, told AFP that the al-'Arish meeting would also discuss the recent Palestinian elections, upcoming "final status" negotiations due to begin with Israel in May, and the formation of 'Arafat's new cabinet.

'Abbas, the architect of the self-rule agreements with Israel, declined to discuss the notion that a new charter could be drafted to replace the old.

"I do not think it is time to talk about such things," 'Abbas said of al-Najjab's proposal. "We know we have an obligation concerning the charter and we will deal with it."

Palestinian Security Forces Kill 2 Islamic Jihad 'Terrorist' Suspects

TA0302192096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two Islamic Jihad members suspected of involvement in the planning of the Bet Lid terrorist attack [22 January 1995] were killed at the al-Shati' refugee camp in the Gaza Strip tonight. The two were killed in a clash with Palestinian security forces.

Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the two, al-Mar Rudaynah and 'Imad al-A'raji, were killed in an exchange of fire inside a house in the camp. They were taken to al-Shifa' Hospital where they were identified by relatives.

Islamic Jihad: Gaza Killings 'Cold-Blooded Murder'

NC0302220496 Paris AFP in English 2139 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Feb 3 (AFP) — Palestinian police on Saturday [3 February] killed two members of the militant Islamic Jihad during a raid on a house in the al-Shati' refugee camp in the autonomous Gaza Strip, a witness said.

About a dozen plain-clothes police encircled the house, and five entered saying they were searching for members of the Islamic Jihad, the owner of the residence, Samirah Hatif, told AFP.

Two members of the Palestinian faction were hiding in a room and refused to open the door. The police then open fired, killing Ayman Razaniah and Amar al-Harash. Their bodies were taken to Shifa' hospital in Gaza City.

A spokesman for the Islamic Jihad, which opposes the autonomy accords signed between Israel and the PLO, called the shooting "an act of cold-blooded murder."

"The victims were killed without even firing one shot," said the spokesman, who called on Yasir 'Arafat's Palestinian Authority to conduct a "thorough investigation to stop these cold-blooded crimes."

Several members of the group have been arrested by Palestinian police after anti-Israeli attacks over the last few months, and most were later released.

The Moslem fundamentalist group is smaller and more radical than the larger Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

Both groups, which have military wings, boycotted Palestinian self-rule elections last month in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. They have vowed to continue their violent struggle against the Jewish state.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad Pledges Revenge for Killings

NC0402095296 Paris AFP in English 0907 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Islamic Jihad issued a statement Sunday [4 February] pledging to take revenge for the killing of its two militants.

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"Our arm is long and we are capable of hitting back against this murder of our two martyrs," it said.

"The revenge of our mujahidin and people cannot be stopped by the terror and oppression of the Palestinian Authority and its zionist allies."

Palestinian Council Member 'Urayqat on Jerusalem, Future

NC0402094396 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Sa'ib 'Urayqat, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, in Jericho, by Muhammad al-Aswad, in Cairo, on 4 February; from the "Dialogue from Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Al-Aswad] We welcome you to the Voice of the Arabs.

['Urayqat] Thank you.

[Al-Aswad] Dr. 'Urayqat, Shim'on Peres' recent remarks about Jerusalem and the Palestinian state have provoked reaction in Cairo. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said the issue of the Palestinian state is basic and said that Egypt rejects Peres' position on Jerusalem. What do you think?

['Urayqat] We cannot stand guard over statements made by Peres and other Israeli officials. Apparently Peres has begun the election campaign early. He realizes that a signed agreement exists, to which most countries have borne testimony, that Jerusalem will be discussed on 4 May 1996, that is, in five or rather four months [as heard]. As everyone knows and unanimously agrees, East Jerusalem is an integral part of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, just like the Egyptian Sinai, the Syrian Golan Heights, and the West Bank. All these are occupied territories to which UN Security Council Resolution 242 applies, particularly the statement in its preamble that the acquisition of others' territory by force is inadmissible. Also applicable in this case is the land-for-peace principle. [passage omitted]

As for Peres' comments on an independent Palestinian state, Peres realizes that after the Palestinian elections—marking the beginning of Palestinian self-determination—the major and real solution of the regional conflict, at the core of which lies the Palestinian issue, can only come about by establishing an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, God willing.

[Al-Aswad] Dr. Sa'ib, the PLO Executive Committee will meet in the Egyptian town of al-'Arish tomorrow to discuss several basic issues facing the Palestinian march. Could you brief us on the importance of the Executive Committee meeting and the chief issues on its agenda?

['Urayqat] The PLO Executive Committee meeting under brother Abu- 'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] in al-'Arish tomorrow is very important. It follows the Palestinian presidential and legislative elections and will lay down the foundations of Palestinian political life in the transitional period over the next three years. There are basic tasks to carry out: A statute of the Palestinian Legislative Council [al-Majlis al-Tashri' al-Filastini] must be drawn up to govern the relationship between all the PLO's bodies. You know of course that the Palestinian Authority and its subsidiary bodies, including the elected legislative council, are components and branches of the PLO. [passage omitted]

Second, there are the agreements, including the provision for amending the clause in the PLO Charter that calls for Israel's destruction. A call will be issued to convene the Palestine National Council [PNC] and other vital issues will be tackled. [passage omitted]

There is a close relationship between the elected council and the PNC. First, all the elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council are automatically PNC members. As we have noted, the PNC is the Palestinian people's supreme legislative body and represents all the sons of the Palestinian nations everywhere. The elected council concerns itself with the issues of the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. The relationship between the two bodies will remain one of full partnership until the permanent status negotiations are completed three years from now and a future parliament [barlaman] of the Palestinian state, God willing, is elected.

PLO's Qaddumi on Return to Territories

JN0402131696 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 4 Feb 96 p 16

[Report by Kamal Zakarinah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—Faruq Qaddumi, member of the PLO Executive Committee and secretary of Fatah Central Committee, said that before holding a PLO Executive Committee meeting, consultations should be held on the topics to be discussed, especially regarding the next stage. He noted that we should continue to ensure that the PLO Executive Committee holds its meetings in its headquarters in Tunis.

In statements to AL-DUSTUR, Qaddumi added that the PLO Executive Committee was not involved in discussions of important issues and that it did not approve the Taba 2 agreement. He said that the PLO Executive Committee meetings seem to be seasonal and that they only discuss a certain topic rather than the items on the agenda.

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Qaddumi said: I previously attended a PLO Executive Committee meeting to discuss the Jerusalem issue. However, this issue was not discussed sufficiently. Indeed, the discussion at the time focused on the upcoming elections.

He added: For all these reasons, I believe that we should be committed to the agenda and to holding the PLO Executive Committee meetings at the PLO headquarters.

Qaddumi said: We categorically reject any idea to amend the [PLO] National Charter, which is considered a national document that adopted principles championed by the masses and gained the approval of all resistance factions, political parties, and independent national symbols.

Qaddumi added: The charter affirms facts which we sought to achieve for years. Therefore we reject the idea of an amendment or a change. In its recent meeting in Algiers, the Palestine National Council [PNC] discussed the nature of the next stage after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The PNC also approved reaching a solution to the Palestinian issue based on the establishment of two states according to international legitimacy and the partition decision. At the time, the PNC announced the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, chose its president and foreign minister, and considered the Executive Committee as a temporary government, which the independent Palestinian state has the right to announce whenever it chooses.

Qaddumi said that whoever changes or intends to change the National Charter will be departing from the national consensus and has no right to represent the Palestinian people.

Qaddumi added: There is no return to the homeland as long as the occupation of the Palestinian territories exists. We continue to struggle against the occupation to gain sovereignty over the land. We will not wait for a decision from Peres to enter our Palestinian territories. This would mean that we accept Peres as a man of sovereignty. It will also mean that all we have gained throughout 30 years of national struggle was a few pennies and many promises from the donors. In addition, a major part of the PLO bodies entered the territories and the Armed Forces became security police. The Israelis transferred some powers to us and released a few struggler prisoners. Meanwhile, sovereignty remained for Israel, which canceled the Jerusalem agreement banning the encroachment on Palestinian institutions and holy places. Israel continued to monitor and control crossing points, continued to build settlements and confiscate land, and continued to control life, electricity, communications, and imports and exports. Moreover, Hebron remained besieged and occupied. So, what did we gain?

All this is a result of the Oslo agreement which departed from the U.S. initiative — Bush's initiative. This initiative calls for the achievement of peace based on the land-for-peace principle, implementing UN Resolution 242, and Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories. Furthermore, the Oslo agreement exempted the United States from being a guarantor of any solution and deprived us of an Arab pressure card; that is, coordination. The Oslo agreement also considered the Palestinian issue an internal issue in Israel that is not linked to any provisions, dates, agreements, or charters. The Israelis interpret the provisions of these agreements according to their whims. They implement whatever they want at dates they deem appropriate. Hence, the Palestinian side began to present demands rather than negotiate.

We fought to remove the occupation and not to live under the occupation. Therefore, I shall remain outside the homeland, struggling along with all the honorable strugglers inside and outside territories to remove the occupation.

Qaddumi said that elections are a democratic idea that must have proper political and social conditions as well as suitable popular circumstances to gauge popular trends and national choices. The presence of the occupation was the greatest shortcoming harming the elections. Regardless of the annoying particulars that permeated these elections, our people took part in the elections with some desire to express themselves, their independent national identity, and their will to exercise sovereignty over their territories and resources. The last thing the Palestinian citizen thought about was who to elect. To the citizen, it was an issue of exercising his right to vote as a challenge to the occupation. In reality, the elections did not represent a popular referendum but a test of future outlooks. Therefore, the psychological shock was that this democratic experience was hampered because of Israeli violations and other manifestations clearly monitored by the people. Qaddumi added: According to a PNC decision, we should have left the elections for the people of the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip so that the elected members would complete the number of PNC members. However, those who came from outside, most of whom are PNC members, ran for elections once again. This was another big mistake. We should have reserved these seats for citizens of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Qaddumi said that the PLO Executive Committee is in charge of the final stage because it deals with the actual Palestinian issue. The final stage focuses on issues that

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are basic to the Palestinian people. These issues are the repatriation of refugees, building an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, removing settlements and borders, the Palestinians' exercise of sovereignty over their territories and resources and of their right to self-determination. All these issues must be recognized based on international legitimacy and the provisions contained in the Oslo, Cairo, and Taba agreements, which Israel did not implement. The provisions deal with the area of Jericho, the crossings, the repatriation of displaced people, the release of struggler prisoners, and the transfer of the remaining authorities.

Qaddumi added: The right to repatriation should include everyone and not just a part of the PLO cadres. This is evidence that we do not have sovereignty over the territories and that the occupation is controlling our people's fate. This is something we reject.

We support the return of every human being who wants to return to his homeland. However, it is preferable that the political figures remain outside so that we can continue to work toward restoring our sovereignty over our territories. This is because the freedom to work outside the territories is greater than that inside the territories due Israeli restrictions.

He said: We frequently visit our brother officials in Syria and Lebanon, the leaders of the Palestinian revolution factions, and national figures to continue to serve the interests of our refugee people there and to reaffirm the right of our people there to repatriation and to mobilize them in this direction.

Qaddumi said: The current stage needs more national consensus and political accord among the Palestinian national forces than meetings. He added: We used to exert great efforts and held lengthy talks with various political forces and resistance factions before every PNC meeting. This was to reach an agreement on all issues to be discussed at the meeting and thus achieve national accord before holding any PNC session.

However, Qaddumi said, it seems that some want to bypass this tradition, which maintained national unity. This is an unpleasant start that will harm national unity and create differences among political forces. This will have an adverse effect on the Palestinian issue and its negotiating track.

DFLP Leader on Return, Palestinian Opposition Presence in Syria

JN0302203496 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 3 Feb 96 p 18

[Interview with DFLP Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah by correspondent Kamal Zakarinah in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Zakarinah] What is the future of the Palestinian opposition's presence in Syria in light of the breakthrough on the Syrian-Israeli track?

[Hawatimah] The basic Palestinian forces, which oppose the Oslo-Cairo-Taba agreements, are firmly entrenched throughout the occupied homeland and the diaspora; they are not stationed in Syria. Moreover, you could say that Fatah was based in Tunis before 'Arafat's return.

We in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] have a large presence in terms of masses, cadres, and leaders wherever our Palestinian people are, first of all in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Hence, the DFLP leadership is spread throughout the occupied territories and our Palestinian people's presence in the cordon states and the Arab and foreign countries of asylum, especially , our people's main presence in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

We have some command offices, media centers, and political ties in Syria. However, this is a temporary situation that depends on developments in the homeland and on our ability to return to the occupied homeland to continue our struggle for the sake of our people's freedom and their exercise of national rights to self-determination, independence, and repatriation. Hence, the issue is linked to our ability to return to the homeland. This was realized by a limited number of our commander members who were able to return, especially since 1991. [passage omitted]

[Zakarinah] What about the circumstances, the dimensions, and obstacle regarding your return to Palestine?

[Hawatimah] First, since 13 September 1993, we have called for the return of all Palestinian leaders and cadres without any political discrimination. We rejected the occupation's arbitrary conditions, which prevented hundreds of PLO leaders and cadres, popular and professional unions, institutions, and bodies from returning to the homeland under the pretext of their opposition to the Oslo agreement or their affiliation with factions that oppose this agreement.

We also rejected discrimination regarding the return of deportees and the release of prisoners. The occupation

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authorities used affiliation and the political stand as a standard and the self-rule authority did not object to this.

When Peres said after the self-rule council elections that members of the Palestine National Council [PNC] can return, we said we are ready to return in accordance with our political stand regarding our people's right to return. We reject any conditions on this return, particularly with regard to the convocation of the PNC.

Second, we have always called for convening the PNC far away from occupation — in Amman, Cairo, or any other Arab or European capital — so that the Council will hold free dialogue without any pressure on its members. We want the PNC to discuss the developments since 1991, particularly the Oslo accords, which were concluded behind the back of the PNC contrary to what happened in Israel, for example, where the accords were presented to the Knesset and public opinion for voting.

Third, we call for not linking the return of the leaders and cadres of the PLO factions with the abrogation of the PLO Charter, which unites our people in the homeland and the diaspora.

We present the following new formula: Israel's recognition of our people's right to self-determination in an independent state which will have open options for union with neighborly Arab countries, particularly Jordan, and solving the problem of refugees in accordance with Resolution 194 in exchange for developing the PLO Charter in accordance with the international legitimacy resolutions, establishing two states on the land of Palestine, and the return of refugees. We present new practical solutions, compromises, for the current issues without submitting to Shim'on Peres' blackmail and terms.

Fourth, we will return the moment Peres removes the Berlin Wall which he has been erecting in our face since September 1993. We will decide our big steps in the heart of the homeland and among our people.

[Zakarinah] Where will you go if you leave Syria?

[Hawatimah] We live among our people in the diaspora. I lived in many Arab countries between 1983 and 1991. We will move in one direction; namely, toward the homeland. We are confident that Syria will remain open to our strugglers and people until they return to the homeland. When Syria achieves a solution that will move the occupation to the 4 June 1967 border and return the Golan citizens to their national soil in exchange for peace this will become a new weapon in the hands of our entire people. Such a solution will be based on the option of steadfastness and comprehensive talks instead of the partial Oslo accords which left the West Bank and Jerusalem as disputed territory. Meanwhile, the occupation is still changing the geographical and demographic features of the land by building settlements and bypass roads and drawing the map of the new expansionist Israel. [passage omitted]

Arab-Israeli Talks

'Arafat, Peres Meet in Davos, Discuss Prisoners, Elections

JN0402092196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat held talks in Davos, Switzerland, with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. The two sides discussed ways of continuing to implement the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles.

During his meeting with Peres on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, 'Arafat stressed the need for the Israeli Government to immediately release all Palestinian female and male detainees in Israeli jails in accordance with the Oslo-B agreement. Talks also dealt with problems related to the Israeli-Palestinian issues and developments in the peace process in light of the successful Palestinian presidential and legislative elections.

In his speech at the World Economic Forum, President 'Arafat emphasized the Palestinian side's commitment to the peace process and criticized Israel's closure of the Palestinian areas for 147 days over the past five months. [sentence as heard]

'Arafat noted the obstacles Israel imposes on the entry and exports of goods and asked the conference's participants to invest in Palestine. He also asked the donor states to honor their financial commitments to the Palestinian people and national authority, stressing that investing in Palestine means helping establish the Palestinian state, a stable region, and a new Middle East. 'Arafat emphasized that economic development is essential to promote political solutions.

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Peres, 'Arafat Meet in Davos on Prisoners, Amending Charter

TA0302195596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the Shim'on Peres-Yasir 'Arafat meeting in Davos, Switzerland, today the prime minister raised the issue of amending the Palestinian National Charter. The PLO head promised that several days after Ramadan ends, he will convene the Palestinian National Council [PNC]. Our correspondent Shlomo Raz notes that under the agreement, the charter is to be amended two months after the PNC is convened.

Another issue raised in the meeting was the release of prisoners. The Palestinians brought up the release of female prisoners, but Peres did not respond.

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Algeria

Algerian 'Source' Denies Rumors About Release of FIS Leader

LD0402173596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] LA TRIBUNE reported today that Abassi Madani [leader of the Islamic Salvation Front — FIS — which was dissolved in March 1992] will be released on 16 February. The Algerian Press Agency has contacted an authoritative source on this matter who described such a report as the peddling of wild rumors and categorically denied the reported information.

The source was also quick to make a link between such rumors and the tendentious campaign by a number of information organs on the [current] activities of the dissolved party [FIS] and to cast doubts about the reasons behind such campaigns, the real aims of which are to stir people up and mislead public opinion.

The source recalled his statement of 3 January when he denied similar reports and asserted that such practices [spreading rumors] which do not serve at all the interest of the nation could cause their perpetrators to face the severity of the law because breaking the law, especially by those who have been calling for more freedom of the press, can be very unproductive.

Egypt

Egyptian FM Musa Views Peres' Remarks on Jerusalem, Syrian Talks

NC0302094696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0845 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 3 Feb (MENA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has declared that Egypt rejects Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' statement that Jerusalem is his country's unified capital, that it is closed politically but open religiously, and that the concept of a Palestinian state is not on the cards.

In a BBC interview broadcast today, Musa stressed that the issue of the Palestinian state is basic, declaring: "We all say the Palestinian issue is at the core of the Middle East crisis and that solving it is the essence of the entire peace process."

Asked to comment on Peres' remarks about a possible link between Jordan and the Palestinian autonomous authority, Musa said: Peres is a third party and has no right to interfere in the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. If the Palestinians and the Jordanians wish to establish a confederal system, then the manner in which this is done and its timing should be left to them alone. They should make the pertinent decisions, not a third country.

Musa said he believes the Israeli prime minister was airing his own general ideas about the issue, which cannot be binding on the Palestinians and Jordanians.

Musa commented on Peres' announcement that the recent round of talks with Syria focused on the character of the peace that will be established and the prospect of economic cooperation. Asked if Syria would agree to such a framework for the negotiations, he said: This is a decision for the Syrians, because they are the party that is negotiating with Israel now.

The Egyptian foreign minister noted that logically all the issues are being discussed, including the borders, withdrawal, mutual security arrangements, and the character of peace.

Asked if it would benefit the Syrian-Israeli talks to bring forward the Israeli general election from October to May, he said: It is better to keep these two issues separate; the negotiations must continue before and after the elections with any Israeli government that is in power.

Musa pointed out that the negotiations are between two countries, not between two particular governments. He said that if the Israeli elections are held early this will have various interpretations.

Asked about Egypt's role in bringing Syrian and Israeli views closer, he said: The position of the Egyptian diplomatic and political establishment is that we are not mediators. We are an Arab country that wishes to see an Israeli withdrawal from all the Syrian territories occupied in 1967 and peace relations based on the Madrid formula of land-for-peace.

The foreign minister said the U.S. Administration is expected to be the side to bring the two countries' views closer. He said that things have not reached the point where such intervention is necessary.

Egypt's Musa Rejects IDF Claims of 'Hindering' Ties

TA0302132796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has angrily reacted to the assessments made by the head of the IDF's [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch at this week's cabinet session, according to which Musa is hindering any improvement in Egyptian-Israeli relations.

At a meeting in Davos with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, Musa said that the Israeli intelligence bodies were

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burned out and had better reexamine their intelligence-collecting methods. I hope your intelligence is smarter than that, Musa remarked.

Our correspondent Shlomo Raz adds that with regard to the negotiations between Israel and Syria, 'Amr Musa said that he could not make any assessment on whether or not an agreement would be reached this year. The Egyptian foreign minister, however, noted that progress had been achieved in the contacts between the two countries.

Egypt's Musa Urges Sudan To Cooperate With UN Security Council

NC0402164896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1530 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Davos, 4 Feb (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has reiterated that Egypt is not at present talking about sanctions against Sudan and even hopes that things will not reach that point. He added that the issue is in the hands of the Sudanese Government and authorities, noting that the Sudanese officials must realize that this is a very serious matter because an attempt has been made on the life of one African head of state in another African state—namely, Ethiopia.

Musa pointed out that there is intense anger in Africa over this abortive attempt. In addition, accusations against Sudan that are documented by evidence have been submitted to the African Mechanism for Conflicts Resolution as well as to the Security Council. Based on this evidence and these indications, resolutions were passed by the African Mechanism and the Security Council, he added.

Musa noted that Sudan must cooperate with the African Mechanism and with the Security Council, adding that the Sudanese authorities must take specific action to either prove their innocence or hand over the defendants. Musa added that the Sudanese authorities must understand that Egypt is sensitive over the assault [on President Mubarak]. Musa added: It is certainly not in our interest to see Sudan punished. Therefore, Sudan must clear its name in the next two months, the deadline set by the Security Council for Sudan to hand over the defendants. He added: We also cannot deny that accusations are now being made against Sudan in international bodies and in the region.

Egyptian Consultative Council Urges Sudan To Comply With UN Resolution

NC0302140696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1300 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 3 Feb (MENA)—The Egyptian Consultative Council has called on the Sudanese Government to comply with the resolutions of the international community and the Security Council concerning Sudan's involvement in the attempt to assassinate President Husni Mubarak last June before it is too late to protect the Sudanese people and avoid UN-imposed sanctions, for which the Sudanese Government alone will take the blame.

The council's Arab and Foreign Relations and National Security Committee voiced support for the resolution issued by the Security Council against the Sudanese Government, pointing out that it embodies the will of the international community and its condemnation of Sudan's support for terrorism and its conduct toward neighboring states, in addition to its involvement in the attempt against President Husni Mubarak.

In a statement issued today following a meeting under its chairman, Dr. Mufid Shihab, the committee said that the attempt to assassinate President Mubarak was an intolerable and extraordinary crime affecting the president and Egyptian national security. [passage omitted]

The statement pointed out that the Security Council resolution will isolate the Sudanese regime internationally and that this isolation is the direct result of the regime's conduct toward its neighbors. The statement added that the Sudanese regime's conduct is condemned by all neighboring states as well as by the OAU.

The committee pointed out in its statement that some states have already started to freeze their diplomatic relations with Sudan and that some economic organizations had already taken measures against the Sudanese regime. This situation will continue as long as the regime backs and provides facilities to terrorist movements and harbors terrorists, the statement said.

The statement also pointed out that the resolution is based on Article Seven of the UN Charter, which authorizes it to take the necessary punitive measures on the political, economic, and even military levels against states that disturb world peace and security, the statement said, adding that the resolution is a binding one, not a recommendation, and must be implemented.

Today's committee discussion stressed that the Security Council resolution turns mere condemnation of Sudanese conduct into a threat to take specific measures against Sudan if it fails to comply with the demands set out before the deadline.

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The committee called on the Sudanese Government to implement the Security Council resolution or face punitive measures. It noted that Sudan is approaching a difficult stage, particularly as it will see resolutions that directly and indirectly affect the conditions of brother Sudanese nationals who are already going through an economic crisis.

Cairo Paper Urges Sudan's Compliance With UN Resolution

NC0402105496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0705 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 4 Feb (MENA)—The newspaper AL-AHRAM has urged the Sudanese Government to comply, without prevarication or procrastination, with the letter and spirit of the UN Security Council resolution that calls on it to hand over the three terrorists accused of involvement in the failed assassination attempt against President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa.

In an editorial today the paper warns the Sudanese Government not to make the mistake of dealing with the letter of the Security Council resolution without its spirit, saying that it is not enough for Sudan to hand over the three suspects; it must also promise not to engage in state terrorism against Egypt or any other country in this region or elsewhere.

The paper calls on the Sudanese Government to revise its calculations fully, particularly as the Sudanese regime has become, in the words of the Sudanese people themselves, an international broker of terrorist operations, a patron of extremist groups, and the official refuge of fugitive criminals.

AL-AHRAM says the Sudanese Government's compliance with the Security Council resolution in letter and spirit is the only way for Sudan to avert serious dangers and consequences to itself, as illustrated by the prospect of international sanctions. [passage omitted]

Cairo Daily Warns Sudan of Possible Sanctions

NC0502070396 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2100 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Cairo, 4 Feb (MENA)—AL-AHRAM Chief Editor Ibrahim Nafi' has stressed that Egypt does not want the Security Council resolution asking Sudan to hand over the defendants in the attempt to assassinate President Husni Mubarak to lead to measures that will increase the Sudanese people's suffering. He also stressed that Egypt does not want Sudan to die politically or economically. But, Nafi' added, no one on the other side can tolerate the irresponsible behavior of the Sudanese Government.

In his weekly column to be published by AL-AHRAM tomorrow, under the headline "Sudan's Government and Allegations No One Believes," Nafi' expresses his fears that Sudan's political regime has gone too far in its delusions; it believes it can challenge the international will, adding that these same illusions led others to ruin and found them unable to change their courses and correct their mistakes.

He also expressed his fear that the 60 days will be spent in futile vituperations instead of dealing with the problem and handing over the accused—unless the state leaders themselves were directly involved in what happened in Addis Ababa last June.

Concluding his column, Nafi' says: In this case the issue will become more complicated and the Sudanese Government could face more difficult conditions than it envisions. Egypt has nothing to do with Sudan's debasement of itself due to past and future practices that will incur the hostility of the whole world order. Egypt has nothing to do with the dreams of leadership and hollow delusions on which this regime's men insist and to which they commit themselves.

AL-AHRAM's chief editor began his column by saying: As expected, the Sudanese Government has started to play the role of the innocent victim of others' plots and of the peaceful country that is innocent of any suspicions of terrorism or of inciting, financing, and protecting it. He notes that hours before the Security Council issued its resolution, Sudanese Foreign Minister 'Ali 'Uthman Taha accused Egypt of wanting Sudan's political death. He added: As if Egypt sheltered terrorism in the Khartoum camps, harbored the terrorists, and challenged the world by protecting and encouraging them to commit their dirty acts. While we can easily understand that this and similar statements are just futile frivolities that do not deserve to be argued, we cannot ignore them this time. The issue is serious. It is clear from the text of the Security Council resolution that this could be the start of successive steps, the destination of which no one can predict.

AL-AHRAM's editorial also comments on the same issue. Under the headline "The Sudanese Regime's Responsibility" it writes that if the Khartoum government insists on its twisted policy of hostility to regional stability and support for terrorism, then this will entail the imposition of sanctions on Sudan, a development we hope will not occur if the Sudanese regime responds immediately to the Security Council resolution and stops interfering in the affairs of neighboring countries, supporting terrorism, and sheltering terrorists. (passage omitted)

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Cairo Paper: Sudanese Leaders' Days in Power 'Numbered'

NC0402105196 Cairo MENA in English 0802 GMT 4 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 4 (MENA)—AL-AKHBAR commented in its editorial today on the Security Council resolution calling on the Sudanese Government to extradite the three terrorists who made an attempt on the life of President Husni Mubarak in June and said the resolution underlines the member states belief in the Sudanese role in that dirty and treacherous plot.

The council could not have unanimously adopted that resolution had it not been confident that the terrorists had been sheltered by the Sudanese regime, the paper said.

The international community has been aware of that since Sudan has been accused for years of harbouring terrorists, the paper said.

The international condemnation, carried in the Security Council resolution, will then be, together with the OAU condemnation, effective with respect to the kind of sanctions that would be imposed on Sudan besides international isolation.

Al-Turabi and al-Bashir's days in power are, according to international observers, thus numbered, the paper concluded.

PLO Leader 'Arafat Arrives in Cairo

NC0502081596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0722 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Feb (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Cairo from Geneva early this morning en route to Gaza. In Switzerland, 'Arafat participated in the International Economic Conference in Davos. He is scheduled to leave Cairo later today. He will return to al-'Arish tonight to chair the PLO Executive Committee meeting there. The meeting will last two days.

Mubarak-King Husayn Cairo Summit in 'Next Few Days'

NC0502104696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1005 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 5 Feb (MENA)—MENA has learned that an Egyptian-Jordanian summit will be held in Cairo in the next few days. President Husni Mubarak and King Husayn of Jordan will hold talks and then continue their talks at a Ramadan breakfast banquet with the participation of some of the new Jordanian Cabinet ministers. The two leaders will discuss the Arab-Israeli peace process, Arab and international issues of common concern, and topics relating to bilateral relations and ways of strengthening them in every sphere.

Egyptian Opposition Newspapers Editors To Be Tried for Slander

NC0402214396 Paris AFP in English 1502 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 4 (AFP) — Three editors from opposition newspapers will be put on trial under a controversial press law for slandering a former minister during recent elections, legal sources said on Sunday [4 January].

Meanwhile, a Moslem fundamentalist lawyer told AFP he intended to raise a slander case against the heads of Egypt's largest government newspapers for depicting him as a terrorist.

Prosecutors decided on Sunday to send to court Mustafa Bakri, Majdi Husayn and Mahmud Bakri, editors in chief of the daily AL- AHRAR, the biweekly AL-SHA'B and the weekly VOICE OF HULWAN respectively.

The three face charges of slandering the former religious affairs minister Muhammad 'Ali Mahjub in a string of articles during legislative elections late last year and cabinet changes in January in which Mahjub lost his post.

The three papers ran articles accusing Mahjub "with malice and without proof" of corruption and of resorting to violence during the election campaign in which he won against Mustafa Bakri in the south Cairo district of Hulwan, prosecutors said.

Both AL-AHRAR, mouthpiece of the Liberal Party, and AL-SHA'B, of the Labor Party, are connected to the Islamic fundamentalist movement, while VOICE OF HULWAN is a sub-publication of AL-AHRAR that appeared during elections.

Husayn has already been convicted under the tough slander law, when he was handed a one-year suspended prison sentence and almost 5,000 dollars in fines last Wednesday for insulting the son of the interior minister.

Journalists raised an outcry over the press law passed last May which allowed for prison sentences up to 15 years for slander, saying it would be used to suppress criticism of the government.

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President Husni Mubarak sought to assuage journalists by assuring them the law would be "put to sleep" and a new one formulated.

But cases have multiplied since, and editors in chief of almost all opposition newspapers have faced accusations.

Meanwhile, Yusuf al-Badri, a former fundamentalist MP, said he had sent warnings to Ibrahim Sa'dah and Makram Muhammad Ahmad, editors in chief of the government daily AL-AKHBAR and weekly AL-MUSAWWAR, respectively, and Hilmi Namnam, an AL-MUSAWWAR reporter.

The warnings were the first legal step to filing a slander suit against them, he told AFP.

The two papers "incorrectly wrote that I intended to raise a court case" to declare Nobel literature laureate Najib Mahfuz a heretic and demand his forced divorce from his wife, al-Badri said.

AL-MUSSAWAR "purposefully changed statements I made in an interview with it, then Sa'dah wrote an editorial calling me a terrorist based on it," al-Badri said.

Al-Badri won a court case last year declaring university professor Nasir Hamid Abu-Zayd a heretic because of his writings and forcing his divorce from his wife on the grounds that a Moslem cannot be married to an apostate.

Al-Badri said he also intended to sue Sa'dah a second time along with Ibrahim Nafi', editor in chief of the largest government daily AL-AHRAM and a close friend of President Mubarak, for running cartoons depicting him as a terrorist.

The cartoons run by caricaturist Mustafa Husayn last week in AL- AKHBAR depict a bearded fundamentalist peeping into couples' bedrooms and raising hypocritical court cases, but al-Badri's name does not appear.

"That's how they are showing me, as a bald terrorist with a beard," al-Badri said, adding he would include in the suit Mustafa Husayn and Mahir Dawud, an AL-AHRAM cartoonist who made similar caricatures.

Sudan

Sudanese Official Criticizes U.S. Withdrawal of Envoys

EA0302165296 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1500 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 2 Feb — Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, chairman of the Transitional National Assembly, has said that the U.S. Government's decision to withdraw its diplomats resident in Khartoum, ostensibly for security reasons, is a matter concerning the U.S. Administration, and does not affect the Sudanese Government, which is faced with attempts to accuse it of terrorism, an accusation which is contradicted by concrete facts.

He said the U.S. ambassador would never find a more secure place to live than Khartoum, and said the decision is based on false justifications in order to windowdress the UN Security Council's resolution.

Commenting on the U.S. decision in a statement to SUNA, Mr. al-Khalifah reiterated that Sudan has never been a terrorist state, adding that the Sudanese Government returned a plane hijacked from Ethiopia, arrested a group of terrorists led by (al-Kwliafi), and had handed over the international terrorist Carlos. He said Sudan's record in this regard disproves all the false accusations against it of terrorism.

Sudanese Opposition Figure Views Sanctions, U.S. Withdrawal of Envoys

NC0302110596 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with 'Umar Nur-al-Dayim, secretary general of the Sudanese opposition al-Ummah Party, in Asmara, by Fayiz al- Miliji, in Cairo; from the "Dialogue from Afar" program; date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Miliji] Dr. 'Umar, we welcome you.

[Nur-al-Dayim] Thank you, a happy Ramadan to you.

[Al-Miliji] Now that the UN Security Council has passed a resolution expressing its opinion of the National Islamic Front [NIF] regime, where does the Sudanese opposition stand?

[Nur-al-Dayim] It is a very important resolution because it was unanimously adopted thus demonstrating a global condemnation of Sudan. For the first time the nonaligned countries have condemned one of their own members. The drafting of the resolution, proposed by Ethiopia and Egypt, was done with the approval of the nonaligned countries. It showed that the African countries and the nonaligned countries unanimously condemn the Sudanese regime. The world has condemned Sudan. The Khartoum gang thus faces full condemnation and must hand over the criminal murderers [suspected of involvement in the attempt on the Egyptian president in Ethiopia] within 60 days.

[Al-Miliji] Dr. Nur-al-Dayim, if the regime does not hand over the three suspects, international sanctions will be imposed. Can the Sudanese people and economy

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bear the brunt of sanctions provoked by the al-Bashir-al-Turabi policies?

[Nur-al-Dayim] These sanctions are a very normal affair. We believe the Sudanese regime has ruined the Sudanese economy. When I was finance minister the U.S. dollar equalled 12 Sudanese pounds. Today a dollar is worth 1,500 pounds. Politically, the regime is paralyzed, especially following defeats for the NIF militias in the south. Ten days have passed since some very terrible events in (Ashwah) but the government, or the Defense Ministry, has been unable to issue an announcement about them. The regime is a criminal one and international sanctions are important because they will hasten its fall. The regime must depart quickly, because Sudan is facing a famine. It is the Sudanese people's task to ensure that this happens. I believe they are doing their duty. Then Sudan can tackle its problems and focus on economic development and reconstruction. The NIF-imposed nightmare must end and the disturbances provoked by the regime in the whole region must stop. Why was the Security Council resolution adopted unanimously? Because everyone is convinced that Sudan is a hotbed of terrorism and anarchy. The damage done to the Sudanese people is much more than that done to our brothers in the neighboring countries. For example, you hear of two Sudanese citizens being arrested in Pakistan in connection with the Egyptian Embassy bombing. Any terrorist operation has Sudan involved in it because Sudan has become a shelter...

[Al-Miliji interrupts] Dr. Nur-al-Dayim, after the Security Council passed its resolution condemning the NIF regime, the United States recalled all its diplomats from Khartoum. What do you think of this U.S. action?

[Nur-al-Dayim] The U.S. Government has been the target of many terrorist actions, most recently in Riyadh. Its recall of its diplomats is a very normal action. The Sudanese regime uses such terms as global arrogance and levels various accusations at the Americans because they placed it on the terrorist list. Viewed as a precautionary measure, the U.S. decision is normal and sound. We hope diplomatic ties will be restored after the irresponsible regime falls.

[Al-Miliji] Dr. Nur-al-Dayim, popular demonstrations have taken place north of Khartoum. How far do you think these demonstrations can escalate?

[Nur-al-Dayim] I would like to assure you that the Sudanese opposition has grown stronger and has carried out many of its tasks. We believe we have scored many diplomatic, political, and economic achievements. After the meeting of its leaders in Asmara, the opposition now has a full peace program. The opposition is unified at home and abroad. We hope the condemnation of the regime over the terrorist attempt to assassinate President Husni Mubarak will mark the beginning of a stronger opposition inside Sudan. We hope to overcome this evil regime quickly and terminate the Sudanese people's misery. We think the chances of dealing the final blow to this shaky regime are now strong. Thank God, the Sudanese people have the necessary experience in this regard.

[Al-Miliji] Dear listeners, we wish to thank you and thank Dr. Nur-al-Dayim.

[Nur-al-Dayim] Thank you, brother.

Sudanese Official Urges End of U.S. Ties, Embassy Closure

NC0402115796 Paris AFP in English 1131 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, Feb 4 (AFP)—A Sudanese MP urged the government on Sunday [4 February] to break diplomatic relations with the United States after Washington decided to pull its diplomats out of Sudan.

"Out of dignity and pride, it is time to close down the American embassy in Khartoum and sever relations with the US until it comes to its senses," Shakir al-Siraj, head of the parliament foreign affairs committee, said.

Al-Siraj, quoted in the daily AKHBAR AL-YAWM, accused Washington of "involvement in a conspiracy against Sudan" after the UN condemned Khartoum and ordered it to hand over two fugitive Muslim militants to Ethiopia.

After the resolution passed on Wednesday, the US decided to remove its diplomats from Sudan saying Khartoum "must take steps to shut down terrorist organizations."

"The Security Council was subjected to high pressure to issue a resolution against Sudan," the MP said, adding the resolution was "lacking objective facts."

Ethiopia accuses Sudan of harboring the three militants suspected in the June attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa.

Sudan insists it cannot find the fugitives and denies any link to the failed attack or to terrorism.

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Wider Implications of Security Council Ruling on Sudan Seen

MM0202153596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 2 Feb 96 p 17

[Article by 'Abd-al-Wahhab Badrakhan: "Beyond Sudan and the Sanctions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The [UN] Security Council's readiness to impose sanctions on Sudan raises a few issues, most importantly the main reason invoked by the Security Council, namely terrorism and its [Sudan's] support for it, harboring its perpetrators, arming them, and therefore controlling it.

It is Khartoum's problem now to suffer the consequences of its backing for the assassination attempt on the Egyptian president. In this, it made a costly mistake, oblivious of the fact that it now has a significant record with the international community. It also forgets that its regime has imposed on itself a regional and international isolation which no claim of belonging to Islam or having the monopoly of it can justify, and has polarized all feelings against it. Moreover, of course, the mere thought of harming the leader of Egypt, the largest neighboring state, has as much to do with stupidity as with self-destruction, more than the destruction of others. Perhaps Khartoum has realized now, albeit very late, that it also blundered in its management of the aftermath of the assassination attempt, since it would have been better to hand over those involved and punish the security officials who allowed it, instead of apologizing to Egypt and Ethiopia.

And yet the fact remains that the circumstances and reasons which made the option of sheltering elements actually involved in, or likely to indulge in, terrorism attractive to Sudan, are misleading and wrong. The fact that some states which practiced this questionable activity before Sudan have paid the price should have enabled Khartoum to evaluate the consequences before carrying out its actions. Perhaps it believed that the diplomacy of "terrorism- backed bargaining" would result in an international opening-up toward it and a recognition of its regime's legitimacy. Yet even in this context others who were "smarter" and more effective did not reap the fruit they were hoping for from such "diplomacy."

In any case, the issue of sanctions depends on many considerations, particularly with regard to its implications and outcome. It is easy for the Security Council to meet, discuss, then decide to impose sanctions on a country, but a repetition of this procedure must be accompanied by serious attempts to crystallize this international policy and deal thoroughly with its causes, instead of just quarreling with the regimes and making the peoples the real victims of the sanctions. The Security Council resolutions, particularly in this context, soon become tools used by the major states, for better or for worse, as part of their policies and personal interests on some continents. The United States is at the forefront of these states, if not the only one to benefit in most cases.

Therefore, beyond Sudan and the sanctions, there must be a new different approach to the issue of "terrorism." It is not enough for the United States to characterize any action as "terrorist" for it to be the case. There is a form of terrorism from which some Arab countries are suffering now, called "Afghans." The United States and its organs are no strangers to its inception and evolution. Also, they did not have the wisdom to control it or contain it when its main task was over in Afghanistan. Many Arab capitals have repeatedly stressed that they possess documents proving that the United States is using these terrorists against them. It is no secret that what Sudan is harboring is of the United States' making.

Hence the only superpower has a responsibility which it does not admit and does not attempt to assume, despite all its claims and the fact that it has put "the fight against terrorism" among the main elements of its international policy. The fight against terrorism must start with a U.S. decision not to use terrorists against their own countries and societies, even if it is not happy with these countries' regimes. The fight against terrorism must start with responsible policies to tackle international crises before they erupt, because if Washington had woken up early from its lethargy toward the Bosnian Serbs there would have been no need for the "mujahidin" and the Sarajevo government would not have resorted to their services or to bringing Iran into the picture. The Afghans and their like are an issue requiring a serious international solution which should not only call for their extermination, as is the case now....

Sudan: Ethiopian Evidence on Mubarak Assassination Bid Said Weak

EA0402204096 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1730 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Brigadier Bakri Hasan Salah has said that information and evidence supplied by the Ethiopian side in connection with the assassination attempt of President Hosni Mubarak is too weak and inadequate to help in finding the suspects.

In a statement made today to "SUDAN AL-HADITH," Brig. Bakri Hasan Salah said that the security committee, headed by the attorney general, has considered

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information supplied earlier as unreliable, and has requested that Ethiopia supply as soon as possible specific information to Addis Ababa through the presidential envoy. It also appeals for more cooperation in this regard.

Brig. Salah said that the scanty information received so far has been passed to the relevant authorities at seaports, airports, and border crossings.

He concluded that accusing Sudan of terrorism is unfounded, and said the term terrorism is being used to achieve political ends.

'Specific' Threats Said Behind U.S. Pullout From Sudan Capital

MM0502120196 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Uthman Mirghani and Muhammad 'Abd-al-Rahman: "Information on Imminent Operations Prompted Americans' Pullout From Khartoum"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, Cairo — Informed diplomatic sources have revealed to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that information the U.S. Administration had received about threats and imminent operations against its embassies and some of its diplomats was behind Washington's decision to withdraw its diplomatic mission from Khartoum.

The sources said that the U.S. Administration seems to have received information about and strong indications of dangers targeting its embassies and their staff in specific areas, in`iding Sudan.

The sources pointed out that the source of threat is not Sudanese organizations, but extremist groups based in Sudan. [passage omitted]. The sources said that the threats and information received by the United States were specific, and that the dangers to which U.S. officials referred in their statements were to do with possible operations against the embassy and U.S. diplomats. The sources added that these threats were so serious that the United States had to withdraw all its diplomats and their families from Khartoum, advising other U.S. nationals to take account of these threats when deciding whether to leave the country. The sources pointed out that these threats may have increased particularly after the imprisonment sentences passed on 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, mufti of the Egyptian Jihad organization, and some of his aides, among them Sudanese elements. The Jihad organization and the Islamic Group issued statements, threatening to attack U.S. interests in retaliation to these sentences. [passage omitted]

Sudanese Paper on Call To Form Commission on Terrorism Charges

NC0402085696 Paris AFP in English 0829 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Khartoum, Feb 4 (AFP)—An independent newspaper here urged the government on Sunday [4 February] to form a commission to look into accusations that Sudan supports terrorism.

The daily AL-RA'Y AL-AKHAR said an unnamed "high-level government source" had called for an "ad hoc committee to look into repeated accusations of terrorism against Sudan and find ways to prevent links between Sudan and terrorism."

The paper noted a string of "terrorist incidents in past years in which Sudan's name has been mentioned", including the bombings of the World Trade Center in New York in 1993 and the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan in 1995.

On Wednesday the United Nations condemned Sudanese "support of terrorism" and demanded that it hand over three Muslim militants who Ethiopia says Sudan is harboring.

The "high-level source" suggested inviting Interpol to help find the three Egyptian militants, suspected by Ethiopia of being behind the June assassination attempt on Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa.

Sudan protests that it cannot find the three suspects and denies any link to the failed bid to kill Mubarak.

Exiled Sudanese Group Supports Anti-Sudan UN Resolution

NC0202152896 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1400 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The General Federation of the Sudanese People, which is based in Egypt, has emphasized its support for the Security Council resolution condemning the Sudanese Government and demanding the hand over of the terrorists who carried out the evil attempt to assassinate President Husni Mubarak.

In a statement issued today, the General Federation said the resolution comes at a time when the ruling regime in Sudan has become an international sponsor of terrorism and provider of political and official shelter for extremist groups and notorious criminals who have fled justice in their home countries.

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Bahrain

New Arson, Sabotage Activities, Arrests Reported in Bahrain

NC0202222596 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2150 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 2 Feb (MENA)—An official source at the Bahraini Interior Ministry stated that several acts of arson and sabotage in various parts of the country have been reported to the security services in the past few days. Security patrols and guards dealt with these crimes, curbed them, and managed to foil some crimes before they were committed.

In a statement to WAKH, the source said the security services arrested two saboteurs while they were trying to sabotage and set fire to the Bahrain National Bank's branch in al-Diraz yesterday morning; the two managed to damage some equipment inside the bank.

The source said Public Security personnel arrested a new group of arsonists and saboteurs recently. So far, the source said, 41 people have been arrested, and the Interior Ministry will send a list of their names to the Justice and Islamic Affairs Ministry.

The source stressed that the security services, in cooperation with all citizens, are in control of the situation. They wish to reassure citizens and foreigners that the security forces are performing their duty in all regions of the country.

Bahraini Ministry Statement Details Sabotage, Arrests

LD0302144296 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic
1211 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 3 Feb — The Bahraini Interior Ministry has said that the security services received in the last few days a number of reports on fires and sabotage operations in some areas throughout the country. The Gulf News Agency [WAKH] quoted a source from the Interior Ministry as saying that last night "the security forces and the guards dealt with these criminal acts and curbed some of the criminal acts."

It said that the government's special security services, for their part, have taken all the necessary security measures in these areas and have continued the investigations and the pursuit of those who carried out these acts to arrest them and refer them to trial.

The source said that the sabotage acts which occurred lately were as follows: "Six private cars have been set on fire in the areas of Tubli, Nuwaydirat, Buri, and Thaman; eight electricity exchange boxes have been set on fire in the areas of Jannusan, Manama, al-Markh, and Barburah, as well as a telephone exchange box in Jannusan; a house was set on fire in the town of Hamad as well as a kiosk selling sweets in Sitrah. Also, Abu Sabi' primary school has been the target for sabotage operations; four classrooms and a water closet have been damaged as well as some other equipment."

The source pointed out that the security organs were able to arrest two saboteurs while they were attempting to set on fire and sabotage the branch of the Bahrain National Bank in the Daraz area on the morning of 1 February after the saboteurs had managed to damage some equipment inside the bank.

He said that personnel of the public security were recently able to arrest a new group of persons who have committed arson and sabotage, and that the number of those who have been arrested is 41. The Ministry will be sending their names to the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs. He added that the security organs have begun interrogating them as a preliminary step prior to referring their cases to the courts. The source reaffirmed that the personnel of the public security are carrying out their security duties in all areas of the country in order to emphasize and strengthen the foundation of security and assurance which Bahrain enjoys. He stressed also that the security organs, in order to protect the safety and security of the citizens and maintain stability, are going ahead in taking the appropriate measures to pursue and arrest the members of the subversive gang who try to commit such acts.

'Subversive Acts' Continue in Bahrain; 40 Arrested

LD0302125496 Riyadh SPA in English
1229 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bahrain/Souk Manama, Feb 3 — An official source at the Bahraini Interior Ministry has said some subversive acts had taken place in the last few days in various parts of Bahrain. 'But, the security forces have positively countered and contained these subversive acts. Moreover, the security forces were also able to abort some crimes prior to their occurrence,' the official source said in a statement to the Gulf News Agency [WAKH].

The source clarified that the subversive acts included setting on fire some vehicles power boxes, a telephone complex, a house in Hamad city and an intermediate school. The security forces were able to capture two of the subversive elements while they had been attempting to set on fire a branch of al-Bahrain National Bank, the official source said.

'Moreover, the security forces had been able to capture a new group of the subversive elements, numbering about

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41. Investigations [word indistinct] security situation is now under control and arrangements are underway to go ahead in taking the appropriate security measures and to chase the members of the subversive elements,' he said.

Bahrain Paper Warns Against Renewing 'Reckless Acts'

JN0302123896 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0830 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 3 Feb (WAKH) — In its editorial today, the Bahraini newspaper AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ wonders: "In whose interest are those irresponsible acts in which a deviant minority is involved against the homeland and citizens? In whose interest is it to insist on setting fires and vandalizing public property?"

The paper says: "All signs have proven that such acts will not affect the national march or obstruct efforts to enhance the country's development and continued progress."

The paper adds: "All facts have proven that such miserable and reckless acts will not destabilize this secure country. It has been proven that the security men, who are the watchful guardians of the safety of the homeland, are always able to track down the criminals and foil their subversive plans."

The paper continues: "Undoubtedly, the attempts by some to renew such subversive acts will inevitably fail. Those people should deeply consider the consequences of such irresponsible acts. The first to lose as a result of such acts will be they themselves and their families and fellow citizens, since the country has spent millions of dinars to improve their living conditions and make available those services and installations of public benefit."

Concluding, the paper says that the attempt to harm the public installations and facilities is a serious crime against the homeland and citizens alike. This is because such acts are meant to waste the national wealth and resources. This is rejected by the entire population. Having successfully confronted the scheme of subversion and sedition, the responsible authorities will not allow that to happen. Hence, any attempt to renew such reckless acts will undoubtedly be firmly confronted, both publicly and officially.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti Ministry Denies Minister's Alleged Remarks on Iraq

LD0402190396 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1700 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 4 Feb (KUNA) — The Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, in a statement released today, has denied remarks a local paper recently attributed to Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, on the measures which will accompany the possible Iraqi implementation of the UN Security Council's Resolution 986.

The locally based English language daily KUWAIT TIMES in its edition last Thursday [1 February] attributed Shaykh Sabah as having said that the United Nations should buy the medical and food supplies for the Iraqi people from Kuwait when Iraq agrees on the implementation of Resolution 986.

The paper said that Shaykh Sabah justified this attitude because "Kuwait was the country that suffered most by the Iraqi invasion in August 1990."

The KUWAIT TIMES indicated on its front page today the inaccuracy of its report on the remarks attributed to Shaykh Sabah and expressed its "regret for the confusion resulting from an erroneous translation"

Iraq had recently accepted an offer to enter into negotiations with the United Nations the day after tomorrow, Tuesday [6 February] in New York to discuss implementation of Resolution 986 which allows the resumption of a limited quantity of oil exports to the value of $2 billion over a six-months period to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of its people.

The Foreign Ministry stressed in its statement that "Shaykh Sabah did not make any statement to the KUWAIT TIMES, nor did he give it an interview."

Furthermore, the Foreign Ministry urged "the people in charge of the daily to seek accuracy in their reporting in order to serve Kuwait's higher interests before anything else."

However, a senior source at the Foreign Ministry has told KUNA that Shaykh Sabah's favorable reaction last month to any eventual serious and clear move by Iraq to comply fully with Resolution 986 still stands.

He reiterated: "We support full compliance with the resolution as it is."

The source said Kuwait's support for the resolution emanates from the fact that while it calls for lifting the injustices facing the Iraqi people it shoulders the

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Iraqi regime with full responsibility for the plight of its people.

In comments published recently Shaykh Sabah said: "There are a number of international resolutions relating to the invasion of Kuwait with which Iraq must fully comply... the Iraqi regime is solely responsible for the suffering of the Iraqi people. It will be a good thing if and when Iraq fully implements Resolution 986," he asserted.

Kuwaiti Assembly Members Blame Government for Economic Situation

JN0202194596 Kuwait ARAB TIMES in English 25-26 Jan 96 pp 1, 8

[Report by Mahmud 'Abd al-Qadir]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kuwait City, Jan 24 — Speaker of the National Assembly has accused the government of violating the laws by withdrawing about KD20 billion [Kuwait dinar] from the Reserve Fund for future Generation since the Liberation.

Speaking during the closed doors session on Tuesday to discuss the financial situation of the country, Ahmad al-Sa'dun was reported to have warned the government of political questioning over mismanagement of the country's finances and illegal withdrawal from the Future Fund. He also held the government responsible for a number of mistakes after the liberation.

In a related development, head of the key Finance and Economic committee, Dr. Isma'il al-Shatti on Wednesday cautioned of the "seriousness" of the financial situation of the country.

Speaking at a press conference, al-Shatti supported government calls for imposing charges and taxation. He even insisted that imposing taxation, levying of charges and reduction of public expenditures are three urgent requirements to "rescue the country's finances."

Convenor of the Finance Committee, MP Ahmad al-Nassar said on Wednesday that the committee will form a special team to study the current financial position of Kuwait in order to submit a comprehensive report to the Assembly. At the end of the second closed doors session on Tuesday, the Assembly asked the committee to prepare a comprehensive report on the financial affairs of the country.

Al-Nassar added that the committee will hold several meetings on the issue and will host officials from the Finance Ministry and Kuwait Investment Authority, KIA.

Sa'dun was also quoted as telling the government not to put the blame on the Assembly for the financial mistakes it had committed. "Had we known the financial situation were so bad, we would have not approved the (KD3.5 billion) defense supplementary budget and the Bad Debt law. Ministers from foreign countries seem to be visiting us on business trips," Sa'dun affirmed.

During the press conference, MP Dr. al-Shatti said that the country's foreign investments before the invasion amounted to about $100 billion, one-third of which was consumed to meet war expenses. Replying to a question on the supplementary defense budget, Shatti said that this budget should not be considered within an economic framework. Its value is political and we felt its importance during our visits to foreign countries.

Al-Shatti said that the total liabilities on the state is about KD10 billion "which represents the actual deficit." "But if we add to it the amount withdrawn from the Reserve Fund for Future Generation, the amount will be a trillion," said al-Shatti inflating the figure to indicate the huge amount. This has resulted through borrowing from the Generation Fund to meet public expenditure requirements.

He insisted that it is not impossible to meet those liabilities and commitments as "our position is still far better than the position of oil countries neighbouring us. We are still capable of facing the budget deficit and managing it in a better way. We have enough assets to cover the deficit but these assets are supposed to be invested and developed and not used to cover deficits," he said.

Al-Shatti said that the government made some positive achievements towards cutting the budget deficit and added that was partially due to pressure exerted by the Finance Committee. He insisted that dealing with the budget deficit should be done through three main measures, "rationalizing spending and reducing expenditures, boosting revenues and finally having an effective management capable of implementing any plan."

Regarding the first measures, al-Shatti said that the government is planning to abolish some establishments, merge some others besides selling some services to the private sector. About boosting revenues, he said that charges can be imposed and certain commodities be repriced in a bid to increase non-oil revenues from the current KD291 million to about KD500 million. In addition, certain taxation systems can be introduced to increase the current revenues from taxation of KD27 million to as much as KD2.5 billion.

Al-Shatti said that if the plan succeeds, non-oil revenues will constitute 23 per cent of the revenues instead of the present 10 per cent. Explaining what he meant by taxation, al-Shatti said that the Zakat [Islamic alms] Law

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that was passed recently (by the Cabinet) will be part of it.

"In addition, there is serious thinking to create a taxation system on companies, sales and luxurious commodities. This will be introduced within the coming few years and will affect only high income category. It will spare medium and low income," he said.

Saudi Arabia

Daily Gives Details on Saudi National Extradited by Pakistan

MM0502105896 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 5 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Jamal Khashuqji: "Saudi National Extradited by Pakistan Named as Hasan al-Surayhi"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — AL-HAYAH has learned that the real name of the suspect handed over to the Saudi security authorities by Pakistan is Hasan al-Surayhi, not al-Sarai as revealed a few days ago by AFP, which cited a Pakistani security official as saying that the person in question is suspected of involvement in the blast at a building used by U.S. military personnel last November. It is noted that the Saudi statement on al-Surayhi's extradition did not make any reference to al-Surayhi's link with this operation. Informed sources have confirmed that al-Surayhi is an Afghan war veteran known as "Abu-'Abd-al-Rahman al- Madani." He comes from Medina and belongs to the al-Surayhi tribe, which is distributed in the al-Hijaz desert. Abu-'Abd-al-Rahman has good military and administrative experience and is known among "retired" Arab mujahidin for his moderate ideology and decisiveness in running an Arab mujahidin base in Pakistan. He used to expel extremist and repudiationist elements from the base. [passage omitted]

More Information on Saudi National Extradited by Pakistan

MM0502141296 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 5 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by 'Umar Faruq: "Pakistan: Exciting Confessions in Saudi National Case"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Islamabad — The Saudi National Hasan al-Saray [as received] made exciting confessions during his interrogation in Pakistan about his links with an extremist organization. The confessions have thrown more light on al-Saray, whom Pakistan extradited to the Saudi authorities in connection with a case against him currently being investigated.

According to the Pakistani account, the investigation with al-Saray included his link with the al-'Ulayya explosion in Riyadh.

A Pakistani investigation office source has confirmed that al-Saray married a French girl who visited him several times at his residence in Renala Khurd in Pakistan. The source said that the girl is nine years old and named Maryam Jikulin [as transliterated] He married her in Shetaral [as translierated] near the border with Afghanistan.

The official said that the Pakistani authorities' investigations included a study of Hasan al-Saray's travel and movements on the basis of the records available to the immigration departments at Lahore and Karachi airports. The official added: "It is certain that Hasan al-Saray spent some time in Saudi Arabia before the al-'Ulayya explosion in Riyadh."

The Pakistani investigation official indicated more than once that al-Saray's arrest and deportation is linked to the incident in question. The official broached al-Saray's links with a number of extremist leaders known for their involvement in subversive actions and propaganda campaigns against their governments. He also had military experience before joining mujahidin ranks in Afghanistan. The suspected Saudi national was extradited to Riyadh at the request of the Saudi authorities based on information supplied by Pakistan.

It is worth mentioning that the French child is the third wife of Hasan al-Saray, 35, in Pakistan. In 1990 he married the sister of a senior official of a religious group in Pakistan. He has four children from this marriage. He confessed in the investigations that he married another Pakistani woman in Shetaral.

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd Donates 10 Million Riyals to Bosnia

LD0402161296 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1415 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 4 Feb — As a means of continuing his support and persistent follow-up of the issues of Muslims everywhere, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and out of his concern to ease the suffering of Muslim there, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, has made a personal donation of 10,000,000 riyals to the sons of Bosnia- Herzegovina. [passage omitted]

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Yemen

Kidnappers of French Tourists Arrested, Leader Killed in Yemen

JN0302185996 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The security organs have managed to arrest 14 members of the sabotage group who took part in the recent kidnapping of the French tourists.

In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', Interior Minister Staff Colonel Husayn Muhammad 'Arab said that these persons were arrested yesterday after the security men monitored the saboteurs and besieged them in their shelters in the al-'Ayn area, Shabwah Governorate.

The minister said that after hunting down and chasing those who participated in the kidnapping of the French tourists, 14 members of the gang were arrested, the head of the sabotage group was killed, and another person was seriously wounded.

The interior minister said that the ministry will not hesitate to take action against anyone disrupting law and order, or harming security and stability in our country. He pointed out that all 18 members of the gang will be referred to the judicial authorities for interrogation and for the necessary legal measures to be taken against them.

Yemen's Salih Dismisses Officers for Failing To Perform Duties

JN0502113996 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the Republic, yesterday visited a number of ministries and government departments to inspect the progress of work and the level of performance there. He visited the Real Estate Department and the Ministries of Interior, Defense, Local Administration, Culture and Tourism, Supply and Trade, and Construction, Housing, and Urban Planning.

President Salih was briefed by officials on the work procedures and the extent to which employees fulfill their duties, observe discipline, and abide by the civil service regulations.

The president asserted the need to firmly carry out the law, to punish those who fail in their duties, to purge the ministries and departments of all corrupt elements, to prosecute them to bring about administrative reform and apply the principle of reward and punishment.

The brother president ordered that a number of officials in the ministries and departments be dismissed due to their administrative corruption, negligence, and carelessness in performing their duties. The president instructed that the necessary legal measures be taken against them. The brother president also instructed that a number of officials in the Ministry of Construction, Housing, and Urban Planning be prosecuted for failing to perform their duties, tampering with urban plans, and committing legal offenses.

In addition, the president banned the sale of public utilities and real estate and called for their protection, considering any illegal sale or action by any person or body to be null and void. The president also instructed the Ministry of Construction, Housing, and Urban Planning to prepare and implement urban plans and to make sure they are being implemented, as well as to demolish any hazardous buildings and implement all relevant laws and regulations.

The brother president also instructed the Ministry of Supply and Trade to formulate an effective supply policy to guarantee the elimination of monopolies and ensure the supply of essential commodities at fixed prices, the activation of supply-control bodies, and the revitalization of these bodies in a manner that ensures the arrest and prosecution of those who tamper with prices so that they may be severely punished.

Furthermore, the brother president instructed the Ministries of Defense and Interior to strip a number of officers and noncommissioned officers in the Armed Forces, the Security Department, and the Central Agency for Political Security of their military ranks, to dismiss them from the Armed Forces and the Security Department, and to refer them to court to be punished for failing in their duties, violating the law, and negligence in performing their duties, so that they may be an example to others.

The brother president asserted the need to combat all forms of administrative corruption in all government departments and to deal firmly with all issues related to negligence in duty or failure of responsibility. In addition, he stressed the importance of effectively implementing administrative reform according to a comprehensive view of the economic, financial, and administrative reform program, in a manner that improves administrative performance and serves the public interest.

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Yemen Denies Preparing for War Over Disputed Island

JN0402135996 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yemen has categorically denied Eritrean accusations that it is preparing for war, and reiterated that it wants to reach a peaceful settlement with Eritrea on the Red Sea island of al-Hanish al-Kabir.

A responsible Yemeni source told the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY that Yemen has opted for peace and not for war.

The Eritrean ambassador to Ethiopia had earlier stated that Yemen did not respond to the positive proposals by mediators and that it was preparing its army for war.

Sanaa has again denied that it has any Eritrean prisoners, as the Eritrean ambassador charged, affirming that the Eritreans are living in Yemen as brothers.

Yemen's Salih Discusses Mediation Efforts With French Envoy

JN0302175796 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Vice President 'Abd-Rabbuh Mansur Hadi received French President Jacques Chirac's envoy Francis Gutmann today. They discussed several issues related to the mediation efforts being made by France to settle differences peacefully between our country and Eritrea, which resulted from the Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir Island.

The president reiterated our country's sincere desire to peacefully settle differences between our country and Eritrea on the maritime borders in accordance with international laws and charters. He expressed appreciation for the French mediation efforts, pointing out that our country will do all it can to make these efforts succeed in a way that will reinforce security, stability, and the safety of international navigation in the Red Sea.

Attending the meeting were 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Dr. Muhammad Sa'id al-'Attar, deputy prime minister, and minister of industry, oil and mineral resources; and (Marcel Logelle), French ambassador to our country.

Yemen's Al-Iryani Discusses Eritrean Crisis With U.S. Officials

JN0402204996 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Brother 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, this afternoon received David Newton, U.S. ambassador in Sanaa, and David Shinn, director of the East Africa Department at the U.S. State Department who is currently visiting our country.

Talks dealt with bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, and the Eritrean occupation of al-Hanish al-Kabir island, and the mediation efforts taking place to reach a peaceful solution to the dispute.

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'Udayy's 'Speech' Said Cause of Iraq TV Transmission Halt

JN0302151196 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 5 Feb 96 p 5

[FBIS Translated Text] Television transmission in Baghdad and the other governorates stopped on 10 January after 'Udayy Saddam Husayn entered the Radio and Television building in al-Salihiyah in Baghdad. 'Udayy was extremely drunk and raving.

'Udayy asked the television personnel to make the necessary technical arrangements because he wanted to deliver a nationwide speech. The personnel immediately reached former information minister Hamid Yusuf Hammadi, who came at once and asked 'Udayy not to do that. 'Udayy, however, beat the minister.

Afterward, the personnel contacted the Iraqi president, who suggested recording 'Udayy's speech and stopping transmission. The media of the regime said the interruption of transmission was due to a technical failure in transmission.

Husayn Kamil Reportedly Retires From Politics

NC0402080096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0718 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 4 Feb (MENA)—An Iraqi source has stated that Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil, Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's son-in-law, has retired from politics and halted his contacts to form a higher council for the salvation of Iraq.

In a statement published today by the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-QABAS, the source said that Husayn Kamil had been expecting international help to stage a coup d'etat in Iraq using his relatives and former assistants. He planned to stage the coup at the end of 1995. But international circles had reservations about helping him because they were not satisfied with his plans. He was also disappointed by the way he was treated by Iraqis living abroad.

The source added that Husayn Kamil has nothing left for him in Jordan, except the right to hospitality on humanitarian grounds. He recently failed to gain access to King Husayn and has no one around him except a small band of businessmen who are holding contacts to purchase a Boeing 707 for use in an air freight business venture.

Senior Iraqi Army Officers Said Arrested Before Reaching Jordan

NC0502163096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Islamic Revolution in Arabic 1430 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The security forces of the Saddamite regime have arrested five senior Iraqi Army officers who were on their way to Jordan. The officers were stopped at the last checkpoint between Iraq and Jordan.

According to informed sources, the five officers were stopped at al-Turaybil checkpoint on 21 January. The same sources emphasize that following the defections of Saddam's sons-in-law and daughters, this checkpoint is now under the supervision of Saddam personally. Strict and very complicated security measures have been applied at this checkpoint since the defections.

UN Official on Preparations for Iraqi Oil-for-Food Talks

JN0202210696 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq and the UN General Secretariat will begin an official dialogue on the oil-for-food formula on 6 February. The head and members of the Iraqi delegation to the talks will arrive in New York on 4 and 5 February. Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, the head of the delegation, will arrive on 5 February, while other members of the delegation will arrive on 4 February.

The Iraqi delegation to the talks consists of several senior officials from the Ministries of Oil, Trade, Industry, and Health and the Central Bank of Iraq. The UN delegation, which will be led by Hans Corell, UN under secretary general for legal affairs, will consist of a similar number of specialists in trade, humanitarian issues, oil, and legal affairs.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in New York said UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali exchanged official letters with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz over the past two weeks to prepare for the start of the dialogue in New York on 6 February.

Butrus-Ghali has held extensive consultations over the past few days in light of the authorization from the UN Security Council to enter into a dialogue with Iraq on selling oil to purchase food, medicine, and other humanitarian supplies.

Corell told reporters in New York today that the technical talks with Iraq are very important. He added that there is great interest in these talks, which constitute a natural development in contacts between the United Nations and UN members. He said he hopes to meet

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with the Iraqi delegation led by Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari on 6 February. The meetings will be held at the United Nations. Participants in the first session will draw up an agenda and an itinerary for the dialogue sessions.

Corell affirmed that the UN secretary general has a clear mandate in this regard. His moves regarding the imminent talks with Iraq are guided by this mandate, which gives him the necessary flexibility, he maintained.

Iraqi Paper Calls Oil-for-Food Step Toward Lifting Embargo

JN0502105296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0808 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 5 Feb (INA)—The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH says the decision to sell oil to meet humanitarian needs will not be an alternative to the full lifting of the embargo imposed on the people of Iraq.

In a commentary, AL-JUMHURIYAH adds that exchanging oil for humanitarian materials is only a step toward ending the economic embargo and restoring normal life in Iraq. This, the paper adds, is understood and demanded by France, Russia, China, and others.

AL-JUMHURIYAH recalls French President Jacques Chirac's assertions in this regard and says: President Chirac told President Clinton that he wishes to see the economic embargo lifted after selling oil to provide for humanitarian needs. It adds: President Chirac's message to his U.S. counterpart is pretty clear. It shows that America's closest partner is not satisfied with the continuation of the embargo and clearly indicates that Chirac believes the only condition for the lifting of the economic embargo is exchanging oil to meet humanitarian needs. [sentence as received] This is a step forward in the French position.

Iraq To Grant 'Great Facilities' to Trade Ships

JN0302115996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1100 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 3 Feb (INA) — Iraq decided to grant great facilities to trade ships carrying food supplies upon their arrival at Iraqi ports overlooking the Arabian Gulf.

This was announced to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY by Ahmad Murtada Ahmad, minister of transport and communications. The minister said the State Enterprise for Iraqi Ports decided that ships carrying food supplies shall be exempted from all fees upon their arrival at Umm Qasr port. The port will offer free services to these ships.

The minister said this measure is meant to support the national economy and provide the basic needs for citizens. He added that Iraqi ports are now ready to receive all kinds of ships, whatever their load. In addition, all facilities are now available to service oil terminals once they resume oil exports.

Two Iraqi Oil Tankers Said Prepared To Supply Ships With Fuel

JN0402121596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1120 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 4 Feb (INA)—The Iraqi Oil Tankers Company prepared two oil tankers designed to supply oil tankers and ships which arrive at the Iraqi ports with fuel.

A responsible source at the Oil Ministry told INA that the two tankers, al-Ba'th and al-Khalidah, which are currently in our territorial waters, are being supplied with fuel from the al-Muftiyah jetty for this purpose.

The source added: The two tankers, al-Ba'th, with a capacity of 10,000 metric tonnes, and al-Khalidah, with a capacity of 7,000 metric tonnes, are specially designed to carry oil byproducts. They used to supply Iraqi and foreign ships with fuel in our territorial waters at the al-Bakr and Khawr al-'Amiyah oil ports and the al- Zubayr and Umm Qasr ports before the Iranian and the 30-state aggressions.

The source noted that these two tankers have sustained grave damage as a result of the Iranian and 30-state aggressions. The Iraqi engineering and technical cadres, however, have managed to repair them and to restore them to service, relying on national expertise and local spare parts, thus, saving large sums of hard currency.

Iraq Not To Interfere To Stop Dollar 'Decline'

JN0402125196 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Television Newtork in Arabic 2200 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, chaired a meeting which comprised the head and members of the economic committee and a number of economic and financial experts.

The conferees studied the progress made by the Iraqi economy in light of a plan based on the principles contained in his excellency the president's letter of 2 December 1995 and in light of the dialogue that will be held with the United Nations on the basis of oil for humanitarian needs, and the recent positive signs in our economy. Those signs have proven the solid basis of the

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Iraqi economy. They were accompanied by a decline in prices and improved exchange rate of the dinar,

The conferees agreed that the basic trends in this regard are positive, and that they were bound to emerge sooner or later. Therefore, they should be bolstered. The conferees recalled the dollar exchange rate in the previous years in an attempt to gauge the proper exchange rate of the dollar against the dinar within a balanced framework. They discovered that the dollar was exchanged for 200 dinars during the first three and a half years of the blockade, that is, from 5 August 1990 to December 1993, although our economy then was less effective than now in terms of the level of the services it rendered or the commodities it produced. Besides, our political ability is now greater. This means that the dinar exchange rate was and still is below its normal rate in accordance with any sound economic theory within a comprehensive framework. It was agreed that speculators' efforts to raise the dollar exchange rate in the past indicated a shortsighted and parasitical view.

The conferees agreed that the state should not act in a manner that would stop the decline of the dollar exchange rate and that all should focus efforts on rendering successful the economic programs decided in accordance with the letter of 2 December 1995. They agreed that those plans constitute a solid basis to ensure a strong and prosperous economy in the interest of everybody, along with the positive results for which one would hope from the dialogue with the United Nations.

It was decided during the meeting that the summer agriculture crops will be delivered to the marketing centers [words indistinct] as of 5 February 1996.

Ahmad Husayn Khudayyir, director of the Presidential Office, attended the meeting.

Iraqi Finance Minister Denies Intention To 'Revive' Dollar

JN0502091096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 4 Feb 96

["Text" of statement by Iraqi Finance Minister Hikmat al-'Azzawi to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY in Baghdad; date not given — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Now that the effects of the reform program, whose structure has been well designed and implemented by leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, have become widely felt, some misled cliques, who are accustomed to illegal profit, began to desperately resist the people's wrath, using their ammunition which is as rotten as the money that they have made at the expense of the happiness of the poor. Therefore, they began to spread rumors, such as the specialized government agencies' intention to nullify large denominations of money, such as the 250- and 100-dinar notes, to delete some zeros from these notes, or to revive the dollar exchange rate with some temporary injections after the dollar lost its balance and its false price.

Such futile and misleading acts no longer deceive our masses who have had a taste of the early fruits of this national program in terms of the abundance of supplied commodities and their low prices. With their sense and vigilance, the masses will foil those attempts and their likes by cliques who seek to continue to exploit the people and make illegal profit at their expense. Therefore, we do not only deny those rumors and their lowly aims and objectives, but we also urge our zealous people to confront them with a spirit of faith and confidence in the instructions of their historic leader, Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him.

Baghdad TV Reports Improved Dinar Exchange Rates, Lower Prices

JN0302180096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in English 1700 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The concepts contained in the message of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn to the cabinet on 2 December have yielded substantial results on the Iraqi economy, and in particular on the exchange rate of the Iraqi dinar.

The president's decision of halting the issue of further banknotes, among other measures, including the sale of excess government vehicles and consumer goods at lower prices, have contributed to stopping the high inflation rates over the past few years.

The decision to revitalize the national currency is a central and irreversible decision. The president's message pointed to this issue by saying that 1996 must be the year to stop the deterioration of the Iraqi currency. This is evident now at the local market as the U.S. dollar continues to drop sharply against the Iraqi dinar.

As far as prices of foodstuffs are concerned, the consumer goods at the market have witnessed drop by as much as 75 percent within the past two weeks. Iraq's announcement that it has completed preparations at the ports to receive commercial vessels of various sizes is another indication of the positive direction of the economy.

The exchange rate of the U.S. dollar against the Iraqi dinar is expected to fall even further in the light of the recent developments between Iraq and the United

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Nations as described by the governor of the [Iraqi] Central Bank. [passage omitted]

Iraqi State Enterprise Reduces Dairy Product Prices

JN0302193796 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The State Enterprise for Dairy Products today reduced the prices of its products by more than 50 percent.

A source at the Enterprise told the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent that the price of milk has been reduced from 2,500 dinars to 1,000 dinars [quantity not specified]; 500 grams of processed cheese reduced from 650 dinars to 350 dinars; 200 grams of cream reduced from 200 dinars to 100 dinars; a 4-liter bucket of yogurt reduced from 650 dinars to 300 dinars; 300 grams of al-Abtal cheese reduced from 650 dinars to 225 dinars; and the price of 250 grams of local butter reduced from 650 dinars to 250 dinars.

Iraq: PUK's Talabani Views Dialogue, Peace with KDP

NC0402155396 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Jalal Talabani, secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], has reiterated the PUK's readiness to hold a direct dialogue with the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] with the aim of establishing peace in Kurdistan. His excellency pointed out that peace cannot be attained without a dialogue over the points in dispute. He said that the dialogue must be conducted in an amicable atmosphere.

Talabani's remarks were made during his meeting with a team of key figures from Irbil. They submitted new peace initiatives for the sake of restoring a comprehensive peace in Kurdistan.

The PUK secretary general reaffirmed the PUK's call to the KDP to accept any of the previously submitted peace initiatives. He pointed out that the PUK is fully prepared to hold new parliamentary elections at the end of the current session of parliament.

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Israel's Peres on Syria Talks, Early Elections

TA0302131196 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0800 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal from Davos]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is convinced that it will be impossible to achieve peace with Syria before elections in Israel regardless of whether these are brought forward to May or held in October 1996 as scheduled. If forced to choose between a tremendous accomplishment or a quick achievement, Syrian President al-Asad will opt for the first choice. He is going for the entire kitty, but slowly.

Several issues were agreed upon at the last round of talks in Maryland — for example, 12 out of the 18 clauses proposed by Israel as subheads for the normalization agreement. Nevertheless, there has not been even a hint of Syrian flexibility when it comes to the security arrangements. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will arrive in the Middle East tomorrow in an attempt to formulate a new framework for launching real negotiations, perhaps with the inclusion of Lebanon.

Peres said that he is certain al-Asad has reached a decision to make peace but that the Syrian leader still does not know how. Minister Yosi Beilin, on the other hand, told us this morning in Davos that no one knows what motivates al-Asad. Beilin does not believe that the present rate of negotiations can lead to an agreement in 1996.

[Begin Beilin recording] The fact is that the Syrians are to blame for the present rate of talks. They are dictating the pace to a great extent. They cannot dictate the solution, but they can control the pace of the talks because there cannot be any negotiations without them. [end recording]

Beilin is opposed to early elections, asserting that the Israeli Government must pursue the political process as long as possible. Meanwhile, Israel has made inroads with regard to more distant and less important players than Syria, for example Qatar, whose foreign minister, Muhammad al-Thani, attended a dinner hosted by Shim'on Peres in Davos last night. Al-Thani, incidentally, left after a short while, explaining to everyone that he had to go because his wife was waiting at home with a stick. As he was leaving, I asked him a few questions.

[Begin recording, in English] [Al-Thani] It is a pity that I could not complete the dinner because I have other commitments, but it is always very nice to meet him and to discuss what we can do together between our two countries.

[Segal] When will we see diplomatic relations between Qatar and Israel?

[Al-Thani] In due time, but we will be one of the first.

[Segal] In a few weeks or months?

[Al-Thani] I cannot see that. No, I cannot see it. [end recording]

Incidentally, the dinner with Peres was attended by the chairmen of international companies such as Volkswagen, Siemens, Fiat, and Olivetti, whose combined capital is estimated at approximately $1 trillion. Peres told his guests that when he congratulated 'Arafat for winning the elections against Samihah al-Khalil, Nabil Sha'th quipped: Why are you surprised? After all, it was a beauty contest.

When it comes to the Israeli elections, the beauty pageant has already begun. Preparations for the primaries are at their peak, and that is why Peres must decide whether or not to call early elections. A lot depends on the Syrians, although Peres continues to insist that the two issues are totally unrelated. I asked Mr. Peres several questions during the flight from London to Davos.

[Begin recording] [Peres] Christopher phoned me yesterday, and we had a rather long conversation. The secretary of state told me that the United States had absolutely no intention of intervening in the election issue, and I told him that there is no connection whatsoever between the elections and the political process, nor will there be any such linkage.

[Segal] You are saying that the elections and the negotiations with Syria are totally unconnected; however, according to even your own timetable, the decision on whether or not to hold early elections will be made a week or two after Christopher's tour of the region.

[Peres] There is absolutely no connection between the elections and the negotiations for the very simple reason that if we want to bring the elections forward, there are strict time constraints within which to do this regardless of Christopher's visit. For example, if we want to hold the elections in May, we must decide on this in mid-February. That is the reason for the timing of this decision, if indeed we decide to call early elections.

[Segal] Peres' statements in London, according to which he will hold a national referendum on a withdrawal from the Golan Heights even after elections are held in Israel above all indicate that he no longer believes it will be possible to attain an agreement with Syria before the 1996 elections. At the same time, Peres disclosed the issues that will feature at the center of his election platform.

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[Peres] I have not changed my mind. I am keeping the promise made by the late Yitzhaq Rabin. I am doing my best to honor every commitment he made. I believe that there is significance in continuity. Therefore, I see no reason to go back on what he promised.

[Segal] All this is true while you are merely filling in for Yitzhaq Rabin following his brutal assassination. However, assuming that you receive the public's mandate in the 1996 elections, why should the issue of withdrawal be put to a national referendum when your declared policy, as well as the Labor Party's political platform, calls for deep territorial concessions to Syria in exchange for peace?

[Peres] First of all, I may not phrase things exactly as you do. Once the election campaign begins, I will place the concept of a comprehensive Middle East peace agreement at the center of my platform. [end recording]

For the time being, Israel is busy dealing with the problems that have cropped up with the countries with which we already have peace agreements. In a short while, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will meet Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa. He will then depart on foot, out of respect for the Jewish Sabbath, for the snowbound town of Davos on his way to lunch with regional leaders.

Israel's Beilin: No Peace Without Compromise on Crucial Issues

TA0402081896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Yosi Beilin, minister in the Prime Minister's Office, by Arye Golan on 4 February; place not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Golan] Minister Beilin, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrives today on his 17th visit to the region. Can anything be expected from this visit, or will the outcome be one we have come to anticipate — namely, a grand statement at the end of Christopher's visit announcing that he has secured Syrian consent to resume the Maryland talks?

[Beilin] This may be the outcome, or perhaps there will be agreement on a more sustained procedure regarding the continuation of the process. Actually, we have held two rounds of exploratory talks which were very successful, and in the wake of those, there is room to start extensive team discussions on all the outstanding issues. If that is the outcome of Christopher's visit, it will be an important one. I do not think a breakthrough can be expected. If the pace can be stepped up, naturally it will be helpful. If only procedures can be established, that will be important, too.

[Golan] The new target date for an agreement, or a breakthrough, with the Syrians seems to be November, before the U.S. presidential elections. That is what the Americans apparently want.

[Beilin] It is very hard to set a date in February for concluding the talks with the Syrians in November. As one who is slightly familiar with the process, I suggest we do not think in terms of months. So far the process has been slower than anticipated and wanted, and I am very much afraid that we will find it hard to set the pace of the negotiations. The very fact that progress has been made on some of the issues is encouraging, but things will not happen at the pace we would like. The pace will be slower. For that reason, I won't set my heart on November. I think we are on our way to peace with Syria, but also to some very, very tedious negotiations. We have not received as yet any signs that the Syrians are willing to compromise on several issues which are crucial for us, and if no compromise is achieved on them, there will be no peace.

[Golan] Thank you very much, Minister Beilin.

[Beilin] Thank you.

Israeli Officials Comment on Syrian Talks, Christopher Visit

TA0402100896 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Feb 96 p 7

[Report by Orly Azulay-Katz, Shim'on Schiffer, and Hayim Shibi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "I am convinced that President al-Asad has decided to make peace with Israel, and is only uncertain about how to do it and how to profit most from it," Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said in Davos. [passage omitted]

Minister Yosi Beilin, also in Davos, noted that a beginning of an understanding has been established between Israel and Syria on the water issue, but there is no agreement on the security and border issues. "The talks will last beyond what we had thought," Beilin said, adding that "the feeling is that the Syrians are serious, but there is no room to speak about a breakthrough within weeks or months."

The Israeli delegation returned to Israel from talks with the Syrians on 2 February. Briefing ministers and political figures, delegation head Uri Savir estimated that the talks with the Syrians will continue despite the fact that an election campaign will be held in Israel. He also estimated that an agreement between

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Israel and Syria will be made in 1996. According to him, the United States will work to establish a series of agreements between Syria and Turkey to guarantee that Syria will continue receiving water from Turkish sources. The Americans will also work to stop the activity of Hizballah in Lebanon, and to make the Saudi royal court a party to the regional agreements.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will be coming to Israel this evening to launch another round of talks between Peres and al-Asad. Israeli political sources believe that the main purpose for Christopher's visit to Israel is to convince al-Asad not to create a crisis in the talks with Israel in order to allow Peres to conduct a successful elections campaign.

This is how the U.S.-Israeli talks scenario looks at this stage: The talks will be kept on a "back burner" at Wye until the political picture in Israel clears up. There may be a brief break in the talks, accompanied by calming U.S.-Israeli messages to al-Asad saying that, once Peres wins the elections, the negotiations will resume with a momentum aiming for a quick conclusion to the talks. It is believed in Israel that "the momentum attained with the Syrians so far," allows "a certain recess" in the talks without fear of losing what has been attained so far.

The new American approach was clearly expressed during a joint briefing to the Israeli media by American and Israeli officials in Washington over the weekend. The Americans have changed their past approach that "a decision must be made now, before we miss the chance," and now say that "we do not want a hasty agreement because it will not last."

Syria has agreed in principle to continue holding the talks even during the Israeli election season, but there is no clear commitment by al-Asad to that effect. The format of the talks will be decided on during Christopher's meetings with Peres and al-Asad this week.

[A report by Arye Dayan, Drora Perl, and Gid'on Kouts on pages 1 and 2 of DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew on 4 February adds: "During his upcoming shuttle tour of the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will announce a new international economic initiative to collect funds for the execution of joint Israeli, Lebanese, and Syrian projects. Christopher, who will start his trip in Jerusalem this evening, has secured the agreement of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad to the initiative." "The initiative Christopher will announce, will be called 'an international economic package.' It will mainly consist of a joint effort by the United States, Japan, and EU states, under American leadership, to provide support for joint frameworks that will help promote three types of economic projects: bilateral Syrian-Israeli projects; trilateral Israeli-Syrian-Lebanese projects; and regional projects."

[The DAVAR RISHON report goes on to say that "A political source in Jerusalem said yesterday that, in the talks that the Israeli delegation to Maryland held with the Americans, it received the impression that the top U.S. Administration echelons have formed an unequivocal decision that every possible effort should be invested to bring about the signing of an Israeli-Syrian peace agreement before the U.S. presidential elections, scheduled for the first week of November."]

Israeli Economic Plan for Peace With Syria Detailed

TA0502125796 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 5 Feb 96 p A5

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel and the United States are drafting a plan for the establishment of an international forum that will provide economic support for the Syrian-Israeli peace accord by raising aid funds in the EU and Japan. Israeli sources estimate that billions of dollars will be needed to finance the economic components of the Israeli-Syrian accord.

According to the proposal, the new forum will be headed by a U.S. figure with an international or economic background, who will coordinate the contacts with the various countries. The candidates for this job include economics Professor Stanley Fisher, who is believed to be close to Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, and former State Department official Edward Djerejian.

Israel and the United States want to begin establishing the economic forum at once, in order to be able to launch operations as soon as an agreement is signed; the economic package deal will be formulated concurrently with the peace accord negotiations. One of the lessons learned in the peace negotiations with Jordan was that the planning and implementation of projects take a long time, causing delays in producing "the fruits of peace."

Shim'on Peres raised the proposal for an international aid mechanism for the agreement with Syria — resembling the forum of donors aiding the Palestinians — in his talks with U.S. and European leaders. Israeli sources explained that, to date, all peace partners have enjoyed U.S. or international aid and their debts were written off. Peres further suggested that the G-7 should "adopt" the Israeli-Syrian agreement as a special project.

The prime minister's proposals to broaden the basis of international support for the agreement also aim at bypassing the objection to aid for Syria prevalent in Congress. Peres believes that the international framework

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will facilitate Syria's incorporation into the regional economic system and will suit Syria better than direct cooperation with Israel.

Uri Savir, chief Israeli delegate to the talks with Syria, presented the idea to his Syrian counterpart, Walid al-Mu'allim, during the most recent round of talks. According to Israeli sources, the Syrian delegate's reaction was favorable. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who started a Middle East shuttle tour yesterday, will discuss the aid plan with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad this week.

The proposal drafted by Israel and the United States will raise financing for several goals:

— Israeli-Syrian-Lebanese cooperation plan and projects: Israel has proposed several plans, including one for joint marketing of tourism packages, joint power grids, and agricultural development. Savir told al-Mu'allim that tourism development will bring in quick profits as there is great potential in the area and this industry has been neglected so far. Al-Mu'allim was particularly interested in tourism.

— Write-off of Syrian debts: Syria's foreign debt totals some $20 billion. Most of it — approximately $12-14 billion — is owed to Russia as payment for arms purchases from the former USSR in the 1980's. The Russians refuse to sell new weapons to Syria until the debt is settled.

In addition, Syria owes $450 million to the World Bank; $800 million to Germany (including some $500 million to East Germany, a debt Syria refuses to acknowledge); $200 million to France; $100 million to Japan; and $240 million to the United States. According to Israeli information, the Syrians have fallen behind in defraying their debt to the World Bank and Western countries, members of the "Paris Club," to the tune of $1.5 billion.

— Economic aid for Syria and Lebanon: The EU has offered to sign a free trade agreement with Syria and to grant it assistance in the framework of the "Barcelona Plan," provided the Syrians will convert to a market economy.

— Economic aid for Israel: High-ranking government elements suggested that the international forum assist in financing compensation for Golan residents and in their relocation to new housing in Israel. Israeli delegates did not raise this proposal at the talks with the Syrians, and the issue of settlement evacuation and compensations was not discussed at all.

— The incorporation of Syria and Lebanon in the regional economic structure established in the multilateral talks on economic development and at the Casablanca and Amman business conferences.

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 5 February carries a report by Ben Kaspit on pages 1 and 2, adding: "The Syrians have rejected an Israeli proposal to turn the Golan Heights into an 'economic cooperation zone' in the framework of normalization steps that are to follow the establishment of peace. The Israeli proposal, which was one of the 18 normalization clauses submitted to the Syrians by the Israeli delegation, spoke of leaving three Israeli factories behind on the Golan Heights: the Golan Wineries, the mineral water plant, and a plastics plant.

["Under the Israeli proposal, these three factories would remain on the Golan under Israeli management but under Syrian sovereignty and with Syrian manpower, and there was to be profit sharing.

["The Syrians, however, rejected any such cooperation out of hand. The Syrian delegation noted that Syria will not have any Israeli marks left on the Golan Heights."

[The report further states: "The Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem yesterday received a dispatch from Professor Itamar Rabinovich, Israel's ambassador to the United States, who reported that the Syrians have recently conveyed to Jordan their great dissatisfaction with the Israeli-Jordanian water agreement, which was signed as part of the peace accord between the two countries.

["The Syrians let the Jordanians know that in the framework of the Israeli-Syrian peace accord, they may demand that the Israeli-Jordanian water agreement be 'reopened.' The Syrians do not like the Israeli-Jordanian cooperation, the two dams the two countries propose to build on the al-Yarmuk River, and a few other clauses."]

Israel's Peres Not To Decide on Elections Before 15 Feb

TA0402140196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has said that he will not make any decision on whether or not to call early elections before 15 February. Our correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that the prime minister made these remarks during consultations with Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal and Coalition Chairman Ra'anan Kohen. Knesset Member Kohen said he would meet the leaders of the Knesset factions in order to hear their positions.

Our correspondent notes that Labor Party officials seek to separate between the official announcement on early elections and the political process. They are particularly

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keen to dissociate the elections from Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit to the region.

Israeli Sources: Peres Decided on Elections, Seeks 'Justification'

TA0202151996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 2 Feb 96 pp A1, A10

[Report by Aluf Ben and Dafna Vardi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Over the past few days, U.S. officials have criticized the linkage created by the Israeli political establishment between the elections date and Secretary of State Warren Christopher's impending visit.

Information has reached Jerusalem indicating that the above mentioned officials assert that Christopher is in an uncomfortable position because the talk about early elections has put the success of his mission in question. In any event, a decision to call early elections will be seen as an indication of his failure. [passage omitted]

A senior Labor party source said that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is waiting for answers from the Americans and from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad regarding the possibility of holding a summit meeting between Peres and al-Asad before October 1996. At the conclusion of Christopher's upcoming tour, and on the basis of the U.S. and Syrian reply, Peres will decide whether to hold early elections.

Interior Minister Hayim Ramon said yesterday that al-Asad has expressed readiness to hold a summit meeting in the summer on condition that Peres makes a public commitment to conduct a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The prime ministers' associates denied Ramon's remarks. Sources at the prime minister's bureau said that "Peres is not creating any linkage between Christopher's visit and his decision on the elections date."

Labor sources nevertheless reported that, in fact, Peres has already decided to call early elections but is now seeking public justification for this move. Peres is holding consultations on the matter with his close adviser, advertising executive Moshe Te'omim. [passage omitted]

Speaking in London, the prime minister asserted that he feels that the government should receive a renewed mandate following the late Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin's death. "Just as I do not believe that a bullet should kill democracy, I do not believe that a bullet should serve as my mandate to lead the country," Peres said. "I need a renewed mandate in order to administer the country's affairs, and that is why I am seriously considering the matter." [passage omitted]

Peres also said in London that there is no contradiction between his optimism and satisfaction with the Maryland talks and the pessimism expressed in Damascus. Peres asserted that the latest round of talks differed from the preceding rounds by the fact that the talks were not limited to security issues and had assumed an unofficial nature. This enabled each team to propose ideas without feeling obligated.

The prime minister does not think that the United States should change the framework of the talks, because there is no point in them making proposals that the parties will reject. "The Americans prefer to raise proposals when there is agreement," Peres explained.

Israeli Officials Believe Early Elections To Facilitate Syria Talks

TA0502072296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will meet with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres in Jerusalem today. The latter will apparently brief him on the decision to hold early elections. Yesterday Peres held a consultation with officials in which the negotiations with Syria were discussed in light of early elections. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz has the details:

[Begin recording] [Raz] Warren Christopher will today officially hear what the Americans already know, namely, that Prime Minister Peres intends to bring the elections forward and that the official announcement will be made in about 10 days.

In the consultation held at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday, everybody's opening position was early elections. This, according to Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, is what Warren Christopher will explain to President al-Asad in Damascus:

[Rabinovich] This week, and probably later on as well, the Americans will explain to Syria the political ramifications of early elections in Israel. Most significantly, they will explain why early elections need not hamper the negotiations. The Americans, on the contrary, will probably be able to point out the advantages of early elections for the negotiations.

[Raz] Over the last few days the prime minister has taken great care to emphasize that the elections and the negotiations with Syria are separate issues and that the talks will continue after the elections.

There is a linkage, however — and even a direct one — between the two issues. The participants in yesterday's consultation believe that early elections will facilitate and help the negotiations.

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[Rabinovich] The secretary of state will be able to explain to Syria that if elections are moved ahead to late spring, for example, then immediately after that — in early summer — the Israeli Government will be able to devote its full attention to the negotiations, unhampered by any elections constraints. Perhaps it will even be able to conduct the negotiations in a more unrestrained manner than previously.

[Raz] After the elections, Shim'on Peres, with a stronger parliamentary base, will be able to reach far-reaching decisions on the Syrian track.

In the consultation, officials reported on progress in almost all issues discussed at the Wye Plantation talks, even on the security arrangements issue.

Today Warren Christopher will hold talks in Jerusalem and tomorrow in Damascus in a bid to fix the date for the next Maryland round of talks late this month in order to take the issues concluded by the Wye Plantation teams to the level of Prime Minister Peres and President al-Asad. [end recording]

'Senior' Israeli Sources Note Reasons for Holding Early Elections

TA0302131796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Senior Israeli sources in Davos said that the election campaign has for all intents and purposes already begun. The sources said that the elections should be brought forward for three reasons: Growing labor unrest in Israel, especially the demands for large wage increases; the need to determine a new agenda for the realities of the 21st century; and the fact that the Israeli Knesset members are already busy with their election campaigns.

Our correspondent in Davos Shlomo Raz reports that the senior Israeli sources believe that negotiations with Syria can continue until two weeks before the elections and resume immediately afterwards because the discussions themselves are being handled by civil servants.

Speaking in Davos, Minister Yosi Beilin acknowledged that although he personally was opposed to early elections, the dynamics that have now been created will be very difficult to stop.

Israel's Likud, Tzomet Agree To Form 'Joint List' in Elections

TA0402194096 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Studio talk between anchorman Hayim Yavin and party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Yavin] And now for the hot story of the evening: The Likud and Tzomet have agreed in principle to run on one list in the upcoming Knesset elections. According to the agreement, Tzomet will receive between seven and eight seats between the second and 40th slots on the list. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel is here in the studio with the details.

[Deqel] Good evening.

[Yavin] What are the possible repercussions of this agreement?

[Deqel] First of all, it could have an effect on the race for the premiership. The agreement has still not been signed and will only be initialed in principle this week and be subject to the approval of the Likud and Tzomet Central Committees. Refa'el Eytan will be No. 2 on the joint list. He will not contest the premiership against Binyamin Netanyahu, David Levi, and Shim'on Peres. The as yet unsigned agreement grants Tzomet between seven and eight seats on the joint list, with the outgoing Knesset serving as the key to the seats' distribution. The Likud had 32 Knesset seats. At the beginning of its Knesset term, before Segev and his colleagues walked out, Tzomet had eight Knesset seats. Now it will get seven to eight seats on the joint list with Refa'el Eytan being guaranteed the No. 2 position. We should stress that there is no talk of forming a new party. This is merely an alliance similar to that in the past between the Labor Party and MAPAM [United Workers Party]. Tzomet will have defined slots on the joint list, which has still not been named. After the elections, each party will retain its own independent institutions and will be able to revert into a separate faction. This move has been taking form for many weeks. It was initiated by the directors general of the two parties, Avigdor Liberman from the Likud and Doron Shmu'eli from Tzomet. Last week, Binyamin Netanyahu and Refa'el Eytan began discussing the issue, and at the end of the week, an agreement in principle was reached on forming a joint list. This is definitely a political bombshell. Let me give you the very brief reactions by both leaders. Neither Tzomet officials nor Binyamin Netanyahu were prepared to comment on the report this evening.

[Yavin] Thank you very much, Yaron Deqel. The Likud will recognize the Oslo agreements and negotiate with

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the Palestinian Authority if it wins the elections. This was the spirit of the remarks made this evening at a meeting of the Likud's political forum which met at the Knesset building in Jerusalem. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 4 February adds that "Tzomet sources said they are considering whether to accept the Likud proposal to run in a joint bloc in the Knesset elections. Netanyahu is offering Refa'el Eytan the No. 2 spot on the joint list if he does not run as a candidate for prime minister. Seven other Tzomet candidates will also be guaranteed safe slots. Our correspondent Dov Gilhar reports that Tzomet sources stressed that Eytan has still not given his final agreement and is waiting to see how the Likud reacts to the proposal."]

Israel's Shin Bet Captures Islamic Jihad 'Terrorist'

TA0402105796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Report by Yoni Ben-Menahem]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Terrorist Nidal Buri was apprehended at the Rafah border crossing two weeks ago while attempting to flee to Egypt. During an investigation by the Shin Bet, he admitted that he was terrorist 'Abd-al-Halim al-Bilbisi's accomplice in planning and organizing the Kfar Darom and Bet Lid bombings. As is known, al-Bilbisi handed a third explosive charge he had planned to detonate over to the Shin Bet.

Meanwhile, new details have emerged about the two Islamic Jihad terrorists who were killed in a clash with Palestinian security services headed by Amin al-Hindi at the al-Shati' refugee camp last night. Terrorist 'Umar al-Aghaj had been the operational commander of the Bet Lid and Kfar Darom bombings. As we all remember, 21 people were killed and 60 wounded in the Bet Lid bombing, and eight Israelis were killed in Kfar Darom. The second terrorist, Ayman Ghazaynah, participated in the murder of Israeli cab driver Ilan Sudri in Ashdod in February 1994, and had been involved in the suicide attack in the Qatif Bloc which was carried out in retaliation for the liquidation of Fathi al-Shaqaqi. Eleven Israelis were injured in that attack.

Israeli security sources say that in recent months the Islamic Jihad's military infrastructure has sustained a lethal blow as a result of Shin Bet activities, among other factors. [passage omitted]

Defense establishment sources voiced satisfaction with the Palestinian security organs' performance against Islamic Jihad terrorists last night.

Also yesterday, the Palestinians captured two more Islamic Jihad terrorists — Riyad Abu-Hashshash and Mahmud Zatmah — who were involved in the Netzarim Junction bombing.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Attends Tour of Gaza Checkpoints

TA0402095796 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 4 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Yosi Torpstein]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] On 1 February, a joint U.S.-Israeli-Palestinian tour of the areas around the Erez and Qarni checkpoints was held. U.S. Ambassador Martin Indyk, who earlier met with Yasir 'Arafat, went on the tour accompanied by economic advisers from the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv. On the Israeli side, the tour was attended by Major General Oren Shahor and Brigadier General Dov Tzedaqa, commander of the liaison and coordination headquarters of the Erez area. On the Palestinian side, the tour was attended by Dr. Nabil Sha'th who was accompanied by Dr. Amin al-Haddad, a Planning Ministry official in charge of the industrial parks that are to be built along the border with Israel.

Column: Israel Seeks U.S.-Mediated 'Taba-Like' Accord With Syria

TA0502103196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 5 Feb 96 p B3

[From Amnon Barzilay's "I Heard, I Saw" column: "Taba Format in the Golan"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Addressing his political associates of 20 years, Interior Minister Hayim Ramon sent a political trial balloon in the direction of the Syrians, the opposition, and the Americans, probably in coordination with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. On 1 February, Ramon was a guest speaker at a meeting of the Hakfar Hayaroq Circle headed by his friend Hagay Merom, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Most of Ramon's remarks revolved around the talks with Syria. [passage omitted]

At one point, Ramon made the following surprise statement: "A Peres-al-Asad meeting can be arranged, but the price is such that we do not think we should pay it." [passage omitted]

Ramon's statement was evidently an indication of a development in the Syrian-Israeli talks: If a decision is made on the security and water arrangements, the two countries will agree on a Taba-like solution. The United States will be the mediator [metavekh], and the

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United States will be the one to decide whether the armistice line or the international border, which lies several hundred meters east of the former, is to be the border line.

Syria, however, has yet to agree to the Israeli demand for the demilitarization of the entire Syrian territory from the Golan Heights to Damascus and from Damascus to the Jordanian space. The Israeli demand is based on the model of the peace accord with Egypt. Israel demands that the security arrangements with Syria permit it to deal with the element of surprise, and that in the event of a Syrian surprise attack, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] should be able to defend the state from Golan Heights territory, rather than the nearby valley. The IDF needs 48-72 hours to get organized to deal with a surprise attack — approximately the time at its disposal in the event of a surprise attack by Egypt.

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Jordanian Minister Denies Government Resignation Reports

MM0202122696 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 2 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Mazin Hijazi: "Jordanian Deputy Premier Denies Reports of Government's Resignation"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah, Jordanian deputy prime minister and education minister, denied in a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday evening that the current government has resigned or that a date has been set for the anticipated reshuffle.

There were reports in the Jordanian capital, Amman, yesterday morning to the effect that Jordanian Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir had tendered his resignation.

Circles close to the Royal Court have said that the government will resign soon, but they did not specify when. They believe it will be a full cabinet reshuffle, not merely a change in the portfolios. [passage omitted]

Advisers to Jordan's King Husayn Resign

JN0302162096 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A royal decree has been issued appointing 'Awn al-Khasawinah chief of the Royal Court as of 3 February 1996. A Royal decree was issued accepting the resignation of Royal Court Chief Marwan al-Qasim as of 3 February 1996.

Another royal decree was issued accepting the resignation of Muhammad Rasul al-Kilani, Yanal Hikmat, and Tariq 'Ala'-al-Din, advisers to his majesty the king, as of 3 February 1996.

His Majesty King Husayn decorated Yanal Hikamt and Tariq 'Ala'-al-Din with al-Nahdah medals of the first order in appreciation of their services and efforts.

'Text' of Al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir's Letter of Resignation

JN0402191296 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1628 GMT 4 Feb 96

["Text" of letter of resignation by outgoing Jordanian Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir to King Husayn in Amman on 15 February — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Your Majesty, it is my honor to dedicate to your exalted office the sincerest feelings of loyalty and faithfulness together with an invocation to God the Almighty to protect you and preserve you as leader of the proud Jordan on the road of good, progress, and freedom. Your Majesty, I was very pleased that you gave me the opportunity over the years to be the companion of your march and close to you. You showed me affection and gave me advice and support. I have always been careful to be loyal to your principles, sincere to your throne, and an honest soldier in every position you chose for me. I will remember your great favors and affection for as long as I live. I will continue to be a support for you and your efforts to build Jordan and serve the nation.

Your Majesty, I, along my colleague ministers, undertook the responsibility with which you charged us about one year ago. We did our utmost to translate your royal designation, deriving our determination from your support and using your vision as a beacon so as to bolster the march of building in this dear homeland — which was the standard bearer of the nation's renaissance and defended its history, unity, and right to a free and decent life.

Foremost of our responsibilities was to safeguard the homeland's security and stability, nurture the democratic march, affirm the supremacy of law, bolster the economic structure, and restore our relations with our Arab brethren to their clear past. Much has been accomplished in these areas. We sought to complete the economic legislature and plan further economic openness. Now, the economic legislative structure has been completed. Studies on most of the projects have almost been completed. Jordan's role on the world's economic map has become a noticeable one. We were keen to entrench the stage of peace and complete its requirements — a stage which represents great aspirations and hopes, now that the homeland has regained all its land and water rights.

Your Majesty, we were keen during this critical phase — which witnessed upheavals that have shaken many visions, changed many positions, and affected the citizen, homeland, and region — to carry out our duty in a manner that pleases God, meets the directives of King Husayn, the leader, and serves our good people. We were proud that we were committed to respecting the law, nurturing democracy, and preserving the steady interests of the homeland and nation.

Today, we believe that the homeland is in need of those who will forge ahead with the march, maximize its gains, and open new horizons for building and work according to the new circumstances. Therefore, I submit to the royal office the resignation of my government. I would like to seize this opportunity to express to you majesty, on behalf of all my colleague ministers, our

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deep gratitude and high appreciation for the support you granted us to carry out the royal letter of designation.

We implore God to grant you continued good health and preserve you as an asset for the homeland and nation. We will continue to be your loyal soldiers as long as we live. May God grant you success and lead your steps on the right path. May God's peace and blessings be upon you.

[Signed] The faithful and sincere Zayd Bin-Shakir

[Dated] Amman, 15 February 1996

'Text' of King Husayn's Letter to Outgoing Prime Minister

JN0402175096 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1625 GMT 4 Feb 96

["Text" of letter from King Husayn of Jordan to outgoing Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir in Amman on 4 February — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Your Excellency brother al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, may God protect and preserve him:

Greetings of amity, confidence, and appreciation. I have received the letter on the resignation of my government which you headed at a delicate stage for the homeland, during which you and your colleague members of the Council of Ministers met all expectations and enjoyed all confidence and appreciation.

In addition to all the government's achievements in the national, pan-Arab, and international arenas, and in economic construction, you have contributed toward entrenching the peace stage and completing its requirements in terms of all aspirations and wishes they represent after the homeland restored all its land and water rights on the Jordanian-Israeli level.

The human being, his freedom, and rights; democracy and the need to protect it within the framework of respect for law and order; and dealing on the basis of the articles of the National Charter under the umbrella of the Constitution; have topped the concerns of your excellency personally, as well as the government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan which you headed. All thanks are for you and for your colleagues.

Since it is time for the flag to be shifted to a new generation of Jordanians to shoulder responsibilities, confront present challenges and work for realizing all future aspirations, the Jordanian people, and I am with them, will remain indebted to the sacrifices of the sincere ones and will seek to add to what they have built and achieved.

As for you dear brother, comrade of a lifelong march and the genuine Hashemite struggle, son of Prince Shakir, who fought the battle of the Great Arab Revolt alongside the founder grandfather 'Abdallah Bin-al-Husayn, and was his comrade during his lifelong march and struggle, and who deserved through his sacrifices, may God have mercy on his soul, the title of a Hashemite prince bestowed on him by his comrade founder grandfather 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn, I am glad to address you, as all Jordanians will address you from now on, as Prince Zayd Bin-Shakir.

May God grant you success and protect you. You have our full love and confidence.

[Dated] Amman, 4 February, 1996.

'Last Minute Hitches' Delay Appointment of Jordan's al-Kabariti

JN0402165796 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 4 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Last minute hitches delayed the official announcement Saturday of the appointment of Foreign Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti as prime minister-designate and the resignation of al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir and his government.

According to well-informed sources, the letter of appointment was ready to be released by the Royal Court yesterday, but the formality was delayed due to Mr. al-Kabariti's busy meetings with parliamentary blocs and independent candidates. His schedule delayed the finalizing of a letter of reply to the letter of appointment, which is traditionally made ready before an official announcement is made.

Also, according to the sources, another reason might have been that al-Sharif Zayd's government, which was preparing a letter of resignation failed to meet early Saturday and meet the deadline for the announcement usually by the eight o'clock news. The kitchen cabinet of al-Sharif Zayd's government met at 7:00 p.m. and a meeting of the whole Cabinet took place at 8:00 p.m., the sources said.

Another reason cited by the sources was that Mr. al-Kabariti did not want to be rushed into forming a government and that he wanted to finish consultations with all possible members of his cabinet by Sunday morning.

"The prime minister-designate's task is made easier when he gets one more day without the lime-light and attention that would come with an official announcement of him being asked to form a government," said one source.

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Al-Sharif Zayd is scheduled to leave on a private visit to London on Monday. While some speculated that the government change would not take place before Thursday, the sources said the change was most likely to be completed before al-Sharif Zayd's departure for London.

Palace and official media sources confirmed that an official announcement will be made today with rising expectations that Mr. al-Kabariti will be ready to announce his final cabinet make-up as scheduled on Monday.

Jordan's Al-Kabariti Forms 31-Member Cabinet

JN0402195096 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1838 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] A royal decree has been issued approving the Council of Ministers nominated by 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti as follows:

We, Husayn I, king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan:

In light of the resignation of Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, and after taking cognizance of Article 35 of the Constitution, decree the following:

'Abd-al-Karim 'Alawi al-Kabariti shall be appointed prime minister, foreign minister, and defense minister.

And, upon the recommendation of the said prime minister;

—Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nusur shall be appointed minister of higher education;

—Dr. 'Awad Khulayfat shall be appointed interior minister;

—Engineer 'Abd-al-Hadi al-Majali shall be appointed minister of public works and housing;

—'Abd-al-Karim al-Dughmi shall be appointed minister of justice;

—Jamal al-Sarayirah shall be appointed minister of post and telecommunications;

—Engineer Samir Qa'war shall be appointed minister of water and irrigation;

—Engineer 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib shall be appointed minister of industry and trade;

—Dr. Salih Irshaydat shall be appointed minister of tourism and antiquities;

—Dr. 'Abd-al-Razzaq Tubayshat shall be appointed minister of municipal and rural affairs and environment;

—Dr. 'Arif al-Batayinah shall be appointed minister of health;

—Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-'Abbadi shall be appointed minister of awqaf and Islamic affairs;

—Dr. Rima Khalaf shall be appointed minister of planning;

—Dr. Hashim al-Dabbas shall be appointed minister of energy and mineral resources;

—Muhammad Dhuwayb shall be appointed minister of state for parliamentary affairs;

—Hisham al-Tall shall be appointed minister of state for cabinet affairs;

—Engineer Hammad Abu-Jamus shall be appointed minister of social development;

—Engineer Munir Subar shall be appointed minister of supply;

—Dr. 'Abd-al-Hafiz al-Shakhanibah shall be appointed minister of labor;

—Miflih al-Ruhaymi shall be appointed minister of state;

—Dr. Ahmad al-Qudah shall be appointed minister of culture;

—Dr. Mustafa Shunaykat shall be appointed minister of agriculture;

—Mahmud 'Abd-al-Latif al-Huwaymil shall be appointed minister of state;

—Muhammad Dawudiyah shall be appointed minister of youth;

—Muhammad 'Awdah al-Nijadat shall be appointed minister of state;

—Dr. Mundhir al-Masri shall be appointed minister of education;

—Dr. Marwan 'Awad shall be appointed minister of finance;

—Khalid al-Madadihah shall be appointed minister of state for foreign affairs;

—Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir shall be appointed minister of information;

—Dr. Kamal Nasir shall be appointed minister of administrative development;

—Engineer Nasir al-Lawzi shall be appointed minister of transport.

[Dated] Issued at Basman Palace on 4 February 1996.

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The prime minister and the ministers took the constitutional oath before His Majesty King Husayn. The oath-taking ceremony was attended by His Highness Crown Prince Hasan. It was also attended by 'Awn al-Khasawinah, chief of the Royal Hashemite Court; His Highness Prince Ra'd Bin-Zayd, the chief chamberlain; His Highness Prince 'Ali Bin-Nayif, his majesty the king's private secretary; His Highness Prince Talal Bin-Muhammad, his majesty the king's military secretary; His Highness Prince Ghazi Bin-Muhammad, his majesty the king's cultural secretary; his majesty the king's advisers; and the imam of the Hashemite household.

Al-Battikhi Appointed General Intelligence Director

JN0402201696 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1852 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A royal decree has been issued appointing Major General Samih al-Battikhi director of the General Intelligence Department as of 4 February 1996.

Former Jordanian Intelligence Chief Appointed as King's Adviser

JN0402201596 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1947 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A royal decree has been issued appointing Mustafa al-Qaysi [former director of the Jordanian General Intelligence Department] as his majesty the king's adviser for national security affairs and rapporteur of the State Security Council as of 4 February 1996.

Islamists To Withold Confidence For New Jordanian Government

JN0402121496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 4 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani; "Special to the JORDAN TIMES"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Islamists will neither participate in nor are they likely to vote in Parliament in favour of the new Cabinet of 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti but relations between the government and the largest party in the Kingdom are poised to improve especially after the Islamists received assurances from Mr. al-Kabariti that a controversial election draft law which the government has just circulated would be withdrawn and a "better" one will be introduced.

Enhancement of "public freedoms will be a task I will shoulder personally," Mr. al-Kabariti was quoted as telling Islamist leaders in a meeting Saturday morning. Ishaq al-Farhan, secretary general of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party which represents the largest coalition of Islamists in the Kingdom, described the meeting he attended with Mr. al-Kabariti as "warm" and said he expected "fruitful cooperation" to ensue between the front and the new government.

"At this stage we will not participate in the government," Dr. al-Farhan told the Jordan Times. "We wish Mr. al-Kabariti all the success in his mission and we are ready to cooperate with him on issues of national concern."

In addition to Dr. al-Farhan, the meeting was attended by IAF spokesperson Hamzah Mansur, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood 'Abd al-Majid Dhunaybat and former speaker of the Lower House of Parliament and now Senator 'Abd-al-Latif 'Arabiyat. Mr. al-Kabariti was not accompanied by aides during the meeting.

Although IAF members will not participate in the new Cabinet, sources close to the Islamists believe that the government will include independent Islamists that are close to and supported by the front, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood. The sources believed that Bashir Jaghbir, secretary general of the Ministry of Public Works, is among the favourites for one of the portfolios.

The anticipated designation of Mr. Jaghbir, who is also an active unionist, sources say, is expected to improve relations not only between the Islamists and the government but also between the government and the professional unions which have been at loggerheads over the issue of normalisation of ties with Israel.

Dr. al-Farhan told the Jordan Times that the front does not "mind" the participation of independent Islamists in the new government but that they "hoped there will be positive response" by the government to safeguarding public freedoms.

In response to the IAF leaders' queries over the proposed election law, which has been severely criticised by many politicians, intellectuals, and columnists, Mr. al-Kabariti promised to introduce a new law that ensures a fair representation for all Jordanians, Dr. al-Farhan said. Mr. al-Kabariti showed understanding to all of the front's demands, especially vis-a-vis public liberties, he added.

"The government should pay greater attention to giving more freedoms to professional associations, activating the rule of law, solving the problem of unemployment, and, most of all, alleviating its campaigns against political parties," Dr. al-Farhan said.

"If you are asking me about our major concern, it is that about fair and free parliamentary elections (which

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are scheduled to be held in 1997)," Dr. al-Farhan said. In brief, Dr. al-Farhan said, the front "is interested in a strong and clean government that will fight corruption."

Dr. al-Farhan did not say whether his group would vote for or against Mr. al-Kabariti's government in the Lower House of Parliament, or raise the possibility of abstaining but IAF Deputy Bassam al-'Umush (al-Zarqa') told the Jordan times yesterday that his 16-member bloc is likely to deny Mr. al-Kabariti the vote of confidence. He however, insisted that cooperation between the new government and the Islamists will be enhanced. "Most probably we will withhold confidence from the government," Dr. al-'Umush said. He did not explain why.

"It all depends on the final make-up of the government, although we are all keen on preserving the country's interests," Dr. al- 'Umush said. "(Mr. al-Kabariti) showed readiness to cooperate and we respect that."

Jordanian Envoy in Baghdad Reportedly Suffers 'Harassment'

JN0202125196 Amman THE STAR in English 1-7 Feb 96 p 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] News from Baghdad said that one consequence of His Majesty King Husayn's call for political changes in Iraq is the recent harassment of the Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad, Bassam Qaqish, by the Iraqi intelligence apparatus, or mukhabarat.

The Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation reported from London that the Mukhabarat placed Qaqish under surveillance, eavesdropping on conversations within his official Baghdad residence from neighboring houses. His electricity and water were deliberately cut off several times a day, often for hours. His telephone line was permanently cut off and large piles of rubbish were left in front of his residence.

The ambassador counteracted these measures by having an electric generator and water storage tanks privately installed. The correspondent added that the ambassador had sent all his family to Jordan for their own safety.

It should be noted that harassment of diplomats is a violation of international law.

Daily Reports Israel Expelled Iranian 'Spy' to Jordan

JN0302092096 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 3 Feb 96 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Official sources on Friday confirmed that Israel had expelled to Jordan a Palestinian who allegedly spied for Iran and said the man would be questioned by Jordanian authorities.

The sources would not confirm or deny that the man, identified as Muhammad Raja Salim Muhammad, a 44-year-old who holds a doctorate in philosophy, was under custody in Jordan.

Mr. Muhammad, who holds a Jordanian passport like most Palestinians living in the West Bank, is a native of Bayt Jala near Bethlehem. He was arrested by Israeli authorities at a relative's house in Bethlehem in November before the Israeli army withdrew from the town in line with the autonomy accords with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Mr. Muhammad was in Bethlehem to visit relatives after arriving from Jordan in October, the Jerusalem Post reported on Thursday.

He was brought to the King Husayn Bridge across the River Jordan and deported to Jordan, which could not turn him away because he held a Jordanian passport.

The expulsion was seen as a convenient way for Israel to close the case after having questioned the man for nearly three months.

According to reports in the Jerusalem Post and other newspapers in Israel, Mr. Muhammad, who lived in Lebanon and Syria as well as Jordan, told his Israeli questioners that he was recruited by a staff member of the Iranian embassy in Amman more than one year ago.

The man who recruited Mr. Muhammad was not identified and there was no indication what prompted the Israeli authorities to arrest him.

The Jerusalem Post said that before his arrest, Mr. Muhammad succeeded in passing to his "handlers" various maps in which "important security installations and government offices" were marked.

He was given a camera and money to buy film and equipment, and "he managed to take a number of photographs but was arrested before he was able to pass them on," said the Post.

The Post quoted a "senior security source" as saying that "Iran, Syria, and other Arab countries have been making a great effort to obtain intelligence information on Israel, and the Iranian efforts have been intensified recently."

Iran describes itself as an archenemy of Israel and is a fierce opponent of the Middle East peace process. It said recently that it had heard of Israeli plans to attack its nuclear installations and had drawn up its own plans to retaliate in the event of such an attack.

Gideon Ezra, former deputy head of Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency, said he did not believe that

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Mr. Muhammad had succeeded in "endangering Israeli security."

Other reports in the Israeli press, quoting a Shin Bet statement, said Mr. Muhammad was also asked by his "handlers" to spy on Jordan.

In November, Jordan declared an Iranian diplomat, Saed Batni, persona non grata and asked him to leave the country after he was found to have been "inciting" Jordanians to stage attacks on Israeli visitors. The Iranian embassy here denied the charge and the Tehran Foreign Ministry, in retaliation, expelled a Jordanian official who was working at the Kingdom's embassy in the Iranian capital.

In mid-1994, the Iranian embassy in Amman was accused of being the main centre for coordination with the Palestinian militant group Hamas and passing Iranian funds to Hamas. Again, the embassy rejected the charges.

Both Iran and Jordan sought to play down the diplomatic flare-up over the expulsion of Mr. Batni. Both sides said they wanted to maintain cordial relations and Jordan sent its first ambassador to Tehran this month after a hiatus of more than 15 years.

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Hizballah Commentary Sees Christopher Tour Set To Fail

NC0302111696 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 3 Feb 96

[From the "Spotlight on Events" feature: 'Christopher in the Region Again"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is beginning a new, dizzying tour of the region this weekend. The main concern on this tour, as in previous ones, is to loosen the knots obstructing a settlement between Syria and Israel. Observers describe this tour as dizzying because nothing new can be expected and because all the parties have done is to learn one another's stances.

Christopher says he is carrying numerous ideas that aim to bring views closer between Syria and Israel. His aides are busy trying to promote optimism over this four-day shuttle. They hope this tour will not be the same as previous ones, which failed to solve any of the disputes obstructing negotiations.

Secretary of State Christopher's tour comes amid a different atmosphere in Syria and Lebanon. The Syrian newspapers and the officials in charge of the negotiations in Israel show considerable pessimism, such that the two parties resumed the war of words that had abated in the past few weeks.

Syria believes Israel is not really serious about reaching a settlement and that Shim'on Peres' enthusiasm for a solution following the assassination of his predecessor, Yitzhaq Rabin, was only a theatrical move aimed at embroiling Syria and prompting it to take inadequate steps to give up its firm stance represented by the land-for-peace formula. The Syrians give as an example the apparent retraction in the tone of Israeli officials on total withdrawal from the Golan and on giving up on establishing early warning stations.

Countering, Zionist officials say that Syria is not serious about peace and that it does not want to declare its clear stance on steps toward normalizing relations, which Israel considers as the basis of a settlement, steps such as the opening of embassies and borders and the exchange of trade and tourists.

The Wye Plantation negotiations have thus entered unknown territory, something about which more than one official in both the Syrian and Israeli camps warned. Thus Christopher's new tour will be more critical than any other, because this time the tour will decide whether Syria and Israel will resume their negotiations quicker to reach an agreement before the Knesset elections in the Zionist entity and the presidential elections in the United States or freeze the talks until after these elections. Such a scenario will harm the popularity of the Labor Party in Israel and President Bill Clinton in the United States. Israeli Prime Minister Peres is trying to forestall failure by threatening to hold the elections early, in June. He aims to pressure Syria to give up its firm stance on the numerous disputed issues.

Damascus is in no hurry. It maintains that it is not concerned with any elections and that its stances are in no way subject to one-upmanship. Between these two stances, Christopher will get dizzy again but this time it will not be the same as before because it may get him and his President out of the White House.

Hizballah Leader in Lebanon Calls On U.S. Envoy To Apologize

NC0302090096 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Na'im Qasim has said the Islamic Resistance has brought honor to the nation and raised the banner of right in the face of the Zionist enemy and the plans of the arrogant forces. [passage omitted]

Commenting on a statement by the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon who will present his credentials, claiming that Hizballah in Lebanon is a terrorist party and that the United States considers Hizballah's deputies as terrorist, Qasim said the United States is saying through its ambassador that the Lebanese people are terrorist, which is an insult to all Lebanon. He added that it is a source of pride for us to intimidate the enemies of God. But the Lebanese Government must not accept this man's credentials until he apologizes in the name of his country for insulting the Lebanese people. He said that no one in Lebanon can cancel out another. He said we call for a frank and open dialogue with the Christians and all Lebanese. He said the most important reason behind the people's empathy toward us is our truth in word and deed. He pointed out that what frightens the United States and the Zionist enemy is the people's love for the Resistance and the mujahidin, which is why the Americans and Zionists are doing all they can to besiege the Resistance and its supporters.

Lebanon's Fadlallah Condemns UN Resolution on Sudan, U.S. Role

NC0202191796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Allamah al-Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah said the UN Security Council is acting as a national security council for the United States and is looking after U.S. world interests. In his Friday [2

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February] sermon in a mosque in Beirut's southern suburbs, Fadlallah condemned the recent Security Council resolution against Sudan. He said the United States is disregarding international laws and resolutions, and violating human rights with sanctions against the oppressed peoples of Sudan, Libya, and Iraq.

Lebanon's 'Awn Announces Decision To Take Part in Elections

MM0202144096 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 2 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Wafa'i Diyab: "'Awn: I Am Returning to Lebanon To Run in and Win Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Former Lebanese Prime Minister] General Michel 'Awn has stressed that he "will return to Lebanon soon to perform his normal activities. It is a final decision and there will be no going back on it, whatever the price." In an exclusive statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday 'Awn said that he "will return to put an end to the claims made by those advocating democracies." He said: "I am surprised how some people can urge us to participate in the elections as though we are against elections. We were the first to demand that elections be held, and we were the first to express our willingness to make the elections a success." He added: "What does someone like me want other than a free system through which to exercise his natural rights."

'Awn's statements coincide with the Lebanese National Congress' preparations to hold its annual conference in Paris 16-17 February to take a final decision concerning the final return to Lebanon. It has been reported that the congress' leadership has begun to move gradually to Beirut in preparation for the next elections.

'Awn said: "If we enter the elections as planned, we will certainly win them." He stressed that "the final decision in this connection depends on the Lebanese authorities' behavior. If the process is characterized by dishonesty, we will not participate. If the process is democratic and free, we will participate vigorously and accept the results."

'Awn urged the formation of a transitional government to supervise the elections. He said: "We want a government that represents all Lebanese. The present government does not, because it is a party to the current dispute." 'Awn stressed that he does not object to the current government passing a new electoral law, "provided that this law is applied on everyone. For example, we should not allocate a district to one party and a governorate to another, otherwise we would be encouraging rigging." On the efforts being made to unite the opposition abroad, 'Awn said: "We are consulting one another constantly, but we will announce nothing before the voters are invited to go to the polling stations."

He added: "All I can say is that there is a minimum understanding on the main political issues."

On the Lebanese national conference scheduled to be held in Beirut under him, 'Awn said: "No final date has been set for this conference. It depends on the date of the elections." He pointed out that "it will be held in September if the elections are to be held in October, or in October if the elections are to be held the following month."

'Awn stressed that he "represents an entire people, so how can he fear the elections or participation in them." He said: "We ran in the recent student and unionist elections and proved that there is an undeclared powerful minority in the country capable of overriding the declared overwhelming majority."

Israeli Shelling, Lebanese 'Resistance' Attack Reported

NC0302122496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces bombarded the outskirts of the towns of al-Mansuri, Majdal Zun, and Zibqin with mortar fire this morning. The bombardment was accompanied by a hail of sniper fire from positions in al-Rahman and Tayr Harfa. Earlier the Israeli forces pounded the outskirts of al-Ghanduriyah, Frun, Wadi al-Hajar, and the al-Litani River basin from their positions in 'Alman and Tallusah. At midnight Israeli warplanes overflew the villages in the central and eastern sectors.

The Resistance has announced that one of its groups attacked the al-Hirdawn post with machine guns and rockets, inflicting casualties.

Islamic Resistance Reportedly Attacks Israeli Position

NC0402080296 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At 0700 today groups from the Islamic Resistance attacked the enemy position in Taw'amat Niha in western al-Biqa' using machine guns and rockets, destroying its fortifications. The fire support unit pounded the post with 120-mm rounds.

Israeli artillery in 'Ayn al-Miri and on the al-Shurayfah hill pounded the outskirts of Mashgharah and 'Ayn al-Tinah, the al- Rahayat hills, and the 'Ayn al-Amin hill with 155-mm rounds.

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Amal Claims Attacks on Positions in South Lebanon

NC0402173296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli gunboats blockading the southern coast today fired heavy machine guns at fishing boats docked in the port of Tyre to prevent the fishermen from going to work.

Meanwhile, the Lebanese Resistance Battalions, Amal, announced that one of its groups launched a 30-minute attack with machine guns, rockets, and artillery on the occupation positions in 'Ali al-Tahir and al-Dabshah at 1430 today. Two artillery emplacements were destroyed and a soldier was wounded in the attack on al-Dabshah position. The soldier was seen to fall near the position's command post.

Amal said that its fire support units registered direct hits. The occupation forces responded by bombarding the area surrounding Qasr Ghandur in al-Nabatiyah, the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, and the Lebanese Army barracks.

The Amal statement adds that an Amal regiment liquidated an element of the South Lebanese Army on the Rimat-Saydun road at 1500. A Willys Jeep immediately took away the soldier's body and the enemy troops threw smoke and fragmentation grenades.

'Terrorists' Shell Lebanese Village in Security Zone

NC0502083996 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0800 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The terrorists resumed their attacks on civilians in the border zone this morning. Terrorist artillery and a rocket bombardment of the village of al-Bayyadah in the western sector wounded a civilian. The terrorists also shelled the South Lebanese Army post in al-Shaqif, causing no casualties.

Lebanese Hizballah Shelling Kills Woman, Wounds Another

NC0502083296 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 0800 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A responsible security source has stated that the bombardment of the village of al-Mansurah this morning, which killed Amirah Muhammad Musa Khashshab and wounded Mirfat Khashshab, was carried out by the terrorist Hizballah organization, which missed its targets in the border zone. Instead Hizballah shells fell in al-Mansurah outside the border zone.

The responsible source said the South Lebanese Army and the Israeli army fired no shells at al-Mansurah this morning.

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'Official Syrian Source' Confirms 'Failure' of Maryland Talks

JN0402081096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour, an official Syrian source confirmed the failure of the Wye Plantation talks although the atmosphere that prevailed at the beginning indicated that it was possible to make headway. Referring to Peres' recent statements about a referendum on the Golan in case substantial territorial changes are required by a peace agreement between Syria and Israel, the Syrian source said such a referendum would be a violation of international legitimacy and its resolutions. The source said any referendum in this regard will be considered a referendum on UN Security Council Resolution 242. The source stressed that the Golan is not a domestic Israeli problem, but an occupied Syrian territory. The source indicated that any referendum will be a new waste of time.

Expressing surprise that Israel is raising detailed issues before an agreement is reached on key issues, such as withdrawal and security, the official source accused Israel of making unfeasible demands. The source indicated that Syria is not concerned about the issue of the Israeli elections and whether they are held on schedule or earlier.

Syrian Official: Gap at Israel-Syria Peace Talks Widening

NC0402154596 Paris AFP in English 1505 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Damascus, Feb 4 (AFP) — Israel's demands in U.S.-brokered peace negotiations with Syria are widening the gap between the two countries, a Syrian official warned Sunday [4 February].

The official said Israeli negotiators at the Wye Plantation outside Washington last week had stepped up their demands over security arrangements in case of Israel's withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

The Israeli position has "widened the gap" between the two sides, he told AFP, asking not to be named. Israel was setting conditions which were unacceptable to Syria.

Damascus has rejected Israel's call for early-warning stations on the Golan if it pulls out from the Golan, which the Jewish state seized from Syria in 1967 and annexed 14 years later.

Israel, arguing that it is a much smaller country, rules out Syrian demands for symmetrical security arrangements on the two sides of the border after a peace settlement.

U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher is to undertake a peace shuttle between Jerusalem and Damascus this week, following the latest round of talks at the Wye Plantation that wound up on Wednesday.

Syrian Sources Hope Christopher Will 'Bridge Gaps' With Israel

JN0502075396 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0600 GMT 5 Feb 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region, responsible Syrian sources emphasized Syria's full confidence in and appreciation for the role of the U.S. sponsor. They expressed hope that Christopher's tour will help bridge gaps which widened after the recent Wye Plantation negotiations when the Israelis presented tangential security issues unrelated to the basic security arrangements under discussion.

Responsible sources told Radio Monte Carlo that demands like withdrawing the Syrian Army beyond Damascus would encroach on Syrian sovereignty and are therefore unacceptable. Moreover, economic partnership, joint investments in the Golan, open borders, and exchange of ambassadors are not possible before Israel commits itself to full withdrawal and to the principle of parallel and equal security arrangements on both sides of the 4 June 1967 border.

The responsible sources added that the economic factor to which Peres clings may lead to a dialogue that would contribute to ending the state of hostility, but this can be done only through goodwill, which begins by recognizing Syrian sovereignty over the entire Golan.

The sources said U.S. President Bill Clinton's statement that Syria and President al-Asad are committed to peace is mainly directed to the Israelis as well as those who cast doubt on the Syrian position on peace. Syria, the sources added, did everything possible for the cause of peace when it made the strategic decision to accept it. It is now the duty of the other party to take the necessary steps as stipulated in the UN resolutions so that peace can finally prevail.

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Syrian Papers Discuss Christopher's Upcoming Trip

JN0402145396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, TISHRIN comments on U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's new tour of the region. The tour aims to assess the results of the Syrian-Israeli Maryland talks and to define the required steps and measures for continuing the talks and advancing the peace process on the Syrian track. The paper believes that this tour, which has been scheduled since the announcement of the beginning of the second phase of the Maryland talks, comes amid indications that Israel is overstating its security concerns and frequently sending through many of its officials contradictory signs about the future of the peace process, which has been affected by these contradictory Israeli signs. Consequently, the two negotiating teams were unable to arrive at satisfactory results.

TISHRIN refers to U.S. President Bill Clinton's assertion that President Hafiz al-Asad is genuinely committed to a true peace and that the United States considers peace between Syria and Israel and its realization in a comprehensive manner in the region at the head of its priorities for 1996. Clinton also said that the United States does not believe the Israeli elections will have any effect on the issue of achieving a just, comprehensive peace. The paper stresses that Syria has frequently announced that it insists on a genuine, just, and comprehensive peace that restores rights to their owners, ensures all parties' security, and leads to the full withdrawal of the occupation troops from the Golan and their return to the 4 June 1967 lines in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. This peace should also lead to equal [mutasawiyah] and equitable [mutakafi'ah] security arrangements on the two sides.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: Having stressed its resolve and determination to pursue its role and exert efforts to establish a just, comprehensive peace, the United States has revealed that the U.S. secretary's new tour of the region will be important in view of the sensitive issues on which Christopher will focus in his talks. This will only be realized by maintaining and activating the U.S. role as a fair partner to make a genuine, just, and comprehensive peace and render the U.S. initiative successful in accordance with the land-for-peace principle.

On the same subject, AL-THAWRAH writes: U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will begin another tour of the region today in a new effort to define the way according to which the peace process will continue on the Syrian track in order to arrive at a settlement on the terms of peace, the territories, and security. These were the important and sensitive points and issues with which the Maryland talks profoundly dealt. No agreement was reached on these issues as a result of the excesses the Israeli side demonstrated in their proposals and understanding of security arrangements.

The newspaper adds: Because the U.S. Administration considers the peace talks a main priority, it is natural that the U.S. sponsor has interest in them and that Secretary Christopher participated in part of the talks to emphasize the U.S. role as an effective partner, and it is natural that it is determined to realize comprehensive peace and to reach an agreement on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks this year. All this has given the U.S. Administration better understanding and permitted it to test the intentions and know the stand of each side on peace. This obliges Washington to clarify matters, defuse the mines Israel has placed on the road of the peace process, and make the Israeli politicians accept correct peace which was clearly expressed by President Clinton in his news conference with French President Jacques Chirac. Thus, it will be possible for the United States to fulfill its pledges and commitments to Syria and the world to establish a just and comprehensive peace based on implementing legitimate international resolutions and the land-for-peace principles.

In another commentary, the paper noted that the United States which insists on realizing just and comprehensive peace this year knows better than anyone else who bears the responsibility of hindering the talks and widening the gaps. Therefore, the United States and its secretary of state are asked to convince Israel to accept the requirements of a just and comprehensive peace.

In its commentary today, AL-BA'TH dealt with the intensive statements and media campaigns, which the Israeli leaders launch every now and then. The paper says that Israel's aim is to transform the peace process and the efforts to activate it into a mere war of words that include previous sugar-coated words, and other tense and contradictory statements. AL-BA'TH notes that entering the essence of the peace process does not mean that the issue is merely a war of words in which the winner is the one who talks a lot and raises his voice above all other voices. It says that the return to presenting preconditions is unacceptable and the hints at early elections or maintaining the Israeli position as it is do not concern Syria at all.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says that the actual confrontation is with the principles of the peace process. What is required is a clear announcement on the commitment to

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these principles, which need no reminders because they have been there for the past four years. All the parties concerned are well aware of them. Will the Peres government commitment to these principles be at the top of the agenda of the U.S. secretary of state's tour of the region without the media clamor which Israel releases on certain occasions and sometimes without any occasion at all?

Damascus Radio: Talks Resumption Hinge on Christopher's Stands

JN0502081296 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 5 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, the newspaper AL-BA'TH writes on U.S. secretary of State Warren Christopher's tour of the region following the failure of the Maryland talks on the proposed security arrangements between Syria and Israel. The paper says that the U.S. secretary's tour is extremely important because it comes in the wake of a round of Syrian-Israeli peace talks, which ended without the achievement of the hoped-for progress to advance the peace process.

AL-BA'TH says that no progress has been achieved because of Israel's stands and impossible demands at the Maryland talks. If Israel continues to insist on those demands, the peace process will not move one step ahead. This is because those Israeli demands have nothing to do with the bases and foundations required for the establishment of real peace in the region. The paper says that Christopher's new tour coincides with a clamor in Israel on bringing forward the elections date. This is despite the fact, as Syria has stressed time and again, that this matter has nothing to do with the peace issue. The elections issue is purely domestic and concerns the Israelis alone. The paper says that Syria is concerned with serious action to establish a just, comprehensive peace in the region. Syria hopes that the U.S. secretary during his trip will attempt to convince the Israelis of the need to adopt a developed stand responding to the bases of the peace process.

AL-BA'TH stresses that Syria has offered a great deal to make the peace talks successful and to lead them to their hoped-for objectives. However, the problem rests with the Israeli side, which continues to follow the same policy it used to follow before the beginning of the peace process. A drastic change in Israel's policy is needed, especially since peace is not in the interest of the Arabs alone, but also in the interest of Israel and the entire world.

Concluding its editorial, AL-BA'TH says: At any rate, the entire world is aware that Syria has made a strategic decision to establish a just, comprehensive peace. Will Israel seriously consider making a similar decision? When will that happen?

On the same subject, TISHRIN says: Israel's impossible demands on security arrangements and the Israeli officials' calls for early elections prior to the U.S. secretary of state's tour have frustrated Christopher's efforts. The paper says that if Peres has not yet made a final decision on holding early elections, then it is necessary for the Israeli prime minister to announce a clear-cut stand on full withdrawal from the Golan and pulling back the troops to the 4 June 1967 lines. This is because such a move would facilitate the U.S. official's mission in the region. Likewise, if Peres accepts the principle of security equatability [al-takafu' al- amni], then that will help pave the way for the achievement of a real progress on the Syrian track followed by similar progress on the Lebanese track.

TISHRIN believes that the resumption of the Syrian-Israeli talks depends on the positive stands that will be conveyed by Christopher. The paper says: This is because the exaggerated Israeli security conditions have not only cast their shadows over the talks, but also widened the gap between the two sides. Syria is looking forward to a real, just, and honorable peace. Syria cannot accept any conditions that might jeopardize its security or retain any trace of the occupation on its territory. The paper recalls that Syria stressed on every occasion its earnest endeavor to achieve a just, honorable, and durable peace. The entire world has acknowledged the sincerity of the Syrian endeavors. However, that cannot take place at the expense of Syria's territory, rights, and security. The Golan has been a Syrian territory since time immemorial, and has never been a domestic Israeli problem subject to referendums or the parties' one-upmanship. Any move in this direction will only increase Syria's doubts about Israel's peace credibility and desire to achieve a comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East.

Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN urges the United States, being the main sponsor of the peace process, to exert efforts to reach a breakthrough based on the UN Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle, especially since it has become clear that Israel has so far not complied with those resolutions and is trying to circumvent them by advancing fabricated security pretexts that have already foiled the Washington talks and the subsequent Maryland talks, on which the entire world had pinned great hopes.

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Syrian Press Blames Israel for Lack of Progress at Wye Talks

JN0302090196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, the newspaper TISHRIN asserts that the Syrian-Israeli Maryland talks should have produced tangible progress, particularly since Syria has done its utmost to advance the peace process. It has committed itself to the requirements of this process provided that Israel effects complete withdrawal from the Golan up to the 4 June 1967 borders in compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. TISHRIN cites the statement by U.S. President Bill Clinton at a joint news conference with French President Jacques Chirac, in which he expressed his belief that Syria is honest and serious in its effort to achieve peace, and that there is no alternative to comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

TISHRIN adds: During the Maryland talks, Israel put great emphasis on security arrangements as if they could serve as an alternative to peace. Israel set forth proposals that violate the principle of security equitability [al-takafu' al-amni] and undermine Syria's security.

TISHRIN recalls the statements made by some Israeli officials, including Ehud Baraq, who said that peace with Syria and Lebanon is not important. Baraq added that peace with other Arabs is also not important. This prompted U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher to underline the importance of peace with Syria, which is the key to comprehensive peace in the region. Christopher pledged to double his efforts to achieve a Syrian-Israeli agreement.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: Given all this, the tour of the region by Secretary of State Christopher on Sunday is extremely important. For the peace talks to bear fruit, the United States must use its influence with Israeli leaders to make them meet the objective requirements of peace, chief among which are complete withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 borders and acceptance of the principle of equitability [al-takafu'] in any future security arrangements. The United States has acknowledged that peace in the Middle East is no longer merely a regional necessity: It has become a pressing international necessity.

The editorial of the newspaper AL-THAWRAH also addresses the statements made by President Clinton on Syria's peace stand, saying: The statements by President Clinton yesterday, in which he expressed optimism over the outcome of the peace talks, and reiterated that President Hafiz al-Asad is honest in his quest for genuine peace are further testimony of leader al-Asad's sound strategic perspective. During two meetings with President al-Asad in Geneva and Damascus, President Clinton realized that President al-Asad is pursuing a genuine peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds: These statements by President Clinton imply that Israel must meet the requirements of true peace, shun impossible demands and preconditions, and abandon efforts to push the peace process into labyrinths that could kill it.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Based on these statements, President Clinton is required to make Israel address the heart of the peace process, avoiding maneuvers and circumventions. He must make Israel meet the basic conditions of peace and uphold the well-known U.S. initiative, which is grounded in the land-for-peace formula. This is because all of Israel's efforts are aimed at evading compliance with the U.S. initiative and drowning the peace process in marginal details contrary to the dictates of common sense. It is our hope that the United States will rehabilitate common sense.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH addresses the tour of the region by the U.S. secretary of state, which will begin next Sunday, saying: Syria supports the U.S. efforts to advance peace talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks toward the set objective, which is the achievement of just and comprehensive peace. This shows that Syria, as usual, will spare no effort this time to cooperate with Washington's endeavors. It should be recalled that the entire peace process was unleashed by a U.S. initiative grounded in UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and the land-for-peace formula. The peace we have in mind must produce complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan up to the 4 June 1967 borders, and also from southern Lebanon. This is because territory, and nothing else, is at the heart of any peace deal.

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Afghanistan

Afghan Government Holds Talks With Opposition in Jalalabad

LD0202174796 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Efforts are being accelerated in Jalalabad to find a solution to the country's crisis. A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports that Jalalabad city, capital of Nangarhar Province, has become a center for talks between the opposition parties.

Our correspondent reports that a delegation of the Kabul administration, headed by Professor 'Abdorrab Rasul Sayyaf, is now in Jalalabad city and is engaged in talks with the various sides.

The Iranian consul general in Peshawar [short break in transmission] Kazi Humayun, Pakistan's ambassador, and a Taleban delegation are now present in Jalalabad.

Nangarhar is the only province in the country that has escaped the civil war. For this reason, Jalalabad has gained importance as a suitable place for talks between domestic and foreign delegations. The leaders of every formation can freely visit this city.

As a result of [words indistinct] between Afghan leaders, the issue of Afghanistan is transformed into an international problem. Every foreign country is trying to put into power its own favourite faction which can safeguard their interests. Therefore, with the start of each round of talks, the foreign countries also resume their endeavors. In line with this notion, the Iranian consul general in Peshawar has met the head of the Kabul administration's delegation.

Afghan High State Council, President Discuss Peace Talks

LD0302175496 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chaired by the esteemed Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, a session of the High State Council was held this morning.

The secretariat of the High State Council reported to BAKHTAR that the country's political situation and the progress of talks between the Islamic State of Afghanistan and opposition groups were discussed and were assessed as positive.

During the session it was emphasized that the Islamic State should strengthen its endeavors to find a peaceful resolution to Afghanistan's problems. Opposition groups were also asked to accept the legitimate demands of the mojahed and persecuted people and to give a positive reply to the Islamic State's efforts to bring about peace.

At today's session of the High State Council, the country's economic situation and in particular the situation in Kabul were discussed. Necessary decisions were made for improving the harsh life of Kabul's citizens.

Afghan Radio Says Iran Hosts Pro-Rabbani Camp

LD0402155496 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The number of armed men in a camp in Iran for Rabbani supporters has increased. According to news agencies, a military camp has been set up in Iran near the Afghan border for the supporters of the Kabul administration who fled Herat after the city fell to the Taleban. The report says that the number of armed men has increased in the camp, which is headed by General Alauddin. They want to launch operations against the Taleban group in Herat Province. It should be said that the Iranian Government has undertaken to provide all the camp's financial and military needs.

Taleban Spokesman Confirms Bombing of Kabul

LD0202162096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to news agencies, yesterday afternoon a jet aircraft dropped four bombs on the residential areas of Kabul, as a result of which seven defenseless people were killed and another 20 people were wounded.

The report says that following this bombing, the Ministry of Defense of the Kabul administration warned that if such attacks continued, the ministry's forces would take reciprocal actions.

The Defense Ministry of the Kabul administration added that the Taleban group was planning to attack Kabul.

In addition, Taleban spokesman Mowlawi Wakil Ahmad confirmed the aerial bombing of Kabul and said that its warplanes carried out the attack.

Taleban Commander Killed by Mine Explosion Near Kabul

LD0202192296 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A well-known Taleban commander has been killed by a mine explosion. A report

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indicates that Rahmattollah, a well-known Taleban commander, with his colleagues, was killed in the Reshkor area [15 km south of Kabul] by an exploding mine.

The report adds that no one knows as yet who planted the mine in an area controlled by the Taleban group.

After the loss of the well-known commander Mola Mohammad Omar [words indistinct] the death of Commander Rahmattollah and his colleagues, is a major loss for the Taleban movement.

Taleban Rockets Kill 2 in Kabul

LD0202174996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, once again the mercenary Taleban fired rockets on Kabul city.

BAKHTAR reported that last night and today the mercenary Taleban fired eight rockets on residential areas, resulting in two of our compatriots being killed and another three people being injured. One residential apartment was also demolished.

Taleban Mortar Fire Wounds 3 in Kabul

LD0302180196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Three Kabul citizens have been wounded by mortar shells fired by Taleban.

BAKHTAR reported that three citizens were wounded this afternoon after Taleban fired two mortar shells into the south of Kabul. They were engaged in buying food for their families. [Words indistinct] The injured people were transferred to the Red Cross hospital.

Taleban Reportedly Kills Prayer Leader in Logar

LD0302215396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Recently Taleban martyred the prayer leader of the grand mosque in Mohammad Aga District, Logar. Reports reaching BAKHTAR say that Mullah Nurkhan was martyred after saying that fighting against the Islamic state is against the Islamic law and Taleban should refrain from fighting. He particularly condemned fighting during the month of Ramadan. The people of Mohammad Aga condemned the Taleban act and [words indistinct].

Afghan Presidential Palace Damaged in Rocket Attack

BK0402093796 Hong Kong AFP in English 0924 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Feb 4 (AFP) — The outer wall of the presidential palace was partly damaged when the Afghan capital Kabul came under rocket attack Sunday injuring three people, witnesses and officials said.

Officials said five rockets slammed into the besieged city, one hitting the official residence of President Borhanoddin Rabbani, demolishing a portion of its northern wall.

Three people were injured when four other rockets landed in the Wazir Akbar Khan area where some diplomatic missions are located, residents said.

Kabul has come under attack a number of times during the past two weeks after the opposition rejected Rabbani's unilateral ceasefire offer last month to mark the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan which began on January 21.

Nobody has claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack.

The previous attacks, including bombing and shelling, were blamed on the rival Taleban militia who have been entrenched in the south and southeastern suburbs of Kabul for more than four months.

The Taleban aim to topple the Rabbani government and enforce Islamic law throughout the country.

Afghan Radio Reports Commander Killed by Rival

LD0402153196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0230 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A famous commander of the Shura-e Nezar [military wing of the Jam'iyat-e Eslamiye] has been killed. Reports reaching Radio Message of Freedom say that Baba Jalandar, a famous Shura-e Nezar commander, was killed a few days ago by Habib, Mullah Fahim's brother. Reports say that hostility arose between Habib and commander Jalandar on the subject of Buzkashi [sporting] horses. As a result, Jalandar was eliminated. Habib was head of the Ariana Buzkashi team, and Baba Jalander was head of the Hidu Kosh team. It is noticeable that the Kabul administration has remained silent about the death of Baba Jalander.

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Afghanistan: Shura-e Nezar Commander Reportedly Surrenders to HCC

LD0202194996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A commander of the Shura-e Nezar [led by Ahmad Shah Mas'ud] has defected to the forces of the High Coordination Council [HCC].

An HCC source in Khenjan [Baghlan Province], reported to a correspondent of Radio Message of Freedom that three days ago Ahmad Gol, a commander of the Shura-e Nezar, with his 10 armed men, surrendered to HCC forces.

The reports adds that this 10-man group, under the command of Ahmad Gol, handed over to the HCC forces light weapons including [words indistinct] and a communication set.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh 'Rocked' by Bomb Blasts; Election Violence Continues

BK0502075696 Hong Kong AFP in English 0730 GMT 5 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA Feb 5 (AFP) — Bomb blasts rocked Dhaka's main business districts Monday during the morning rush hour sending passers-by and car drivers scurrying for cover, witnesses said, as the opposition prepared to announce new strikes ahead of upcoming elections.

The series of blasts struck the Moitjheel and Dilkusha business districts, panicking early morning commuters and jamming traffic, witnesses said, but there were no immediate reports of injuries.

Two bombs exploded near a police van but order was quickly restored as riot police arrived on the scene, they said, adding that several young men who were believed to be opposition members were seen fleeing the blast area.

Bangladesh's opposition parties, meanwhile, prepared to announce later Monday new activities aimed at disrupting the upcoming polls which they claim will be unfair because they are being organised under Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's administration. The opposition had earlier demanded that Zia resign and transfer power to a neutral caretaker government, which would handle the polls, as the main condition to breaking a parliamentary deadlock that has lasted nearly two years.

The opposition campaign, led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed's Awami League, has worried the country's business community.

Salman F. Rahman, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said business was concerned about the "serious political situation," and added that it was considering taking a "political stand" to defend the economy.

Newspapers reported new outbreaks of violence just 10 days ahead of the polls with thre-e candidates being beaten up and the election commission office in Natore district, in northern Bangladesh, being set ablaze late Sunday.

In Sirajganj, in the west, one of three candidates was beaten and forced to take a dive into a pond by alleged opposition activists, the reports said.

At least 50 people were injured during similar violence Saturday and Sunday in Dhaka and different parts of this politically volatile South Asian country.

Plans by the opposition, which is boycotting the polls, could include a 48-hour general strike to coincide with the elections, observers said, adding that already four general strikes have been enforced this year.

Zia is scheduled to go ahead with a revised campaign tour to constituencies after earlier trips to Sylhet and Khulna districts met with fierce violence.

The state-owned Dainik Bangla newspaper said Monday that "holding this election is not only necessary, but also a matter of urgency.

"No logic can stand in favour of (the opposition's) election boycott," it said.

The Daily Star newspaper warned of spiralling violence and said the popularity of Zia's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was "sharply declining at this point.

"With the passage of each day, BNP is surely and certainly becoming more and more isolated," it said, adding that the current administration was becoming too dependent on security forces.

The election commission was meanwhile closely watching developments and has requested that political parties "show restraint."

"I will try to hold the elections peacefully," Chief Election Commissioner justice A.K.M. Sadeque told the Independent newspaper.

Strike Called by Bangladesh Opposition Parties Observed 'Peacefully'

BK0302162696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The eight-hour hartal [strike] called by some opposition parties passed off peacefully

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in Dhaka today. Police said there was no untoward incident anywhere in the city. Motor vehicles were off the roads, but rickshaws plied more or less in all the routes. All flights operated normally, while water vessels plied as usual. Leaders and workers of some opposition political parties held rallies and processions at various places.

India

Indian Official Reveals Plan To Export Heavy Water to South Korea

BK0302160496 Delhi All India Radio Network in Hindi 1515 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A.N. Prasad, director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Center, says that India has become self-sufficient in the production of heavy water and will soon begin exporting it. He says the first consignment of heavy water will soon be sent to South Korea. Heavy water is used in nuclear reactors. He says even though developed countries have refused to provide plutonium technology to India, the country has developed this technology indigenously.

Indian Minister Views Missile Program, Skirmishes With Pakistan

BK0402125296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The external affairs minister has said that India will not abandon the Prithvi missile program. In an interview to a news agency in New Delhi today, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee asserted that the deployment of the medium-range missile depends on the country's threat perceptions and the situation prevailing. Rejecting the U.S. call to halt the test firing of Prithvi, Mr. Mukherjee categorically stated that India has no intention of destabilizing in any way the situation prevailing in the subcontinent.

[Hong Kong AFP in English at 1044 GMT on 4 February in a similar report adds: "India on Sunday rejected demands by Washington to put its missile programme on hold saying the army would deploy its long- range missiles if necessary. 'There is no question of abandoning the Prithvi programme,' External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said of an indigenously-built missile which was last tested on January 27 despite protests from India's arch-rival Pakistan. He dismissed the comments of the US government, telling the Press Trust of India saying 'we do not consider it (the test) a mistake.'"

[The agency continues: "He said the production of Prithvi and its deployment would depend on 'our threat perceptions and the situation prevailing at the point of time' and flayed Pakistan for its ambitions to acquire more arms.

["Mukherjee in his interview to the news agency also said that he hoped the skirmishes last month between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir borders would not escalate. 'Let us hope it will not be there,' he said in reply to questions on the possibility of a war breaking out between the two estranged Asian neighbours over the border clashes.

["Mukherjee said India's defence preparedness was for the protection of its national interest. 'It has no intention of aggravating the situation (in South Asia). Unfortunately, Pakistan is on a buying spree to acquire sophisticated military hardware like Mirage jet fighters, submarines and missiles from different sources ...' he said. 'In this context and what has happened in the last four decades, India cannot compromise its security,' Mukherjee said in a reference to India's own plans to add a bigger punch to its firepower."]

Indian 'Countermeasures' to Pakistan's Arms Acquisition Noted

BK0302105796 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 2 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Dinesh Kumar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India will go ahead with plans to deploy the indigenously-developed Prithvi surface-to-surface missile (SSM) as one of the counter-measures to Pakistan's weapons' acquisition programme. The counter-measures will also include keeping open the nuclear option as also the option to resume testing of the currently capped 'Agni' intermediate range ballistic Missile.

This was made clear during a series of presentations by senior defence ministry officers at a meetings of the defence consultative committee here yesterday which was chaired by Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao who also holds the defence portfolio.

The meeting, convened to discuss Pakistan's weapons' acquisition programme and proposed countermeasures by India, was attended by, among others the two ministers of state in the defence ministry, the defence secretary, the secretary, defence production and supplies, and the vice-chiefs of three services.

The Prithvi missile, which has been successfully tested by both the Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Army, is yet to be deployed. However, between 15 and 30 missiles have already been prepared for induction into the Army while a fresh programme to test the longer range variant for the Air Force has already been put in motion.

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Highly-placed sources said counter-measures by the Indian Air Force included acquisition of five squadrons (about 100 aircraft) of the Sukhoi-30MK long-range multi-role fighters, airborne early warning (AEW)/ airborne warning and control system (AWACS), air-to- air refuelling capability, more beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missiles and indigenously-developed radars to improve the air defence ground environment system.

Members were told that in addition to inducting the Arjun tank, the Army was exploring the possibility of acquiring the T-72S/T-80 tanks of Russian origin which is an advanced version of the T-72 tank currently with the Indian Army. The Army has already conducted trials of these two tank variants. Other measures include acquisition of night-fighting capabilities for attack helicopters and force multipliers such as remotely-piloted vehicles (RPVs) and gun-locating radars (ANTPQs) which already form part of the Pakistani army inventory. The Navy's acquisition programme includes air defence ships, other surface vessels and submarines.

Defence ministry officials told this newspaper that these counter-measures had become necessary keeping in view the changing international environment after the recent Brown amendment and reports of transfer of Chinese nuclear technology to Pakistan. "It appears that China and the United States are collaborating to arm Pakistan." remarked a senior defence ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The Prime Minister was reportedly asked by some members whether the government would sustain the political will and finances for the envisaged acquisitions. "Mr Rao assured them of the government's commitment." said a senior defence ministry official.

India Objects to Pakistani President's 'Discourtesy'

BK0202160696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India today strongly objected to a photograph of a scene of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in the New Year greeting cards sent by Pakistan President Mr. Leghari to the president, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, and the prime minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao. The Pakistan high commissioner, Mr. Riaz Khokhar, was summoned to Foreign Office by the foreign secretary, Mr. Salman Haider, to convey New Delhi's strong resentment at the discourtesy shown to the Indian leaders.

Indian Article Claims U.S. Seeks 'Schism' in Indo-Iranian Ties

BK0302122496 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 2 Feb 96 p 9

[Article by K.P.Nayar: "U.S. Striving To Create Schism in Indo-Iranian Ties"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Iran has become a major contentious issue between India and the US.

Although neither India nor the US is willing to acknowledge it, American officials have spent several hours in negotiations with their Indian counterparts, trying to come to terms with the new warmth in Indo-Iranian relations.

When Indo-US naval exercises off the Goa coast were being planned last year, the Americans insisted that the Indian Navy use Kilo- class submarines in these exercises.

Behind this insistence was the US navy's paranoia over Iran, which had just acquired two Kilo-class submarines from Russia. An exercise with the Indian Navy using these submarines would have prepared the Americans for the eventuality of having to confront the Iranian navy in the Gulf.

For the Americans, the exercise with India was crucial because of the matching sonar signatures of the Indian and Iranian submarines. Besides, India and Iran have the only navies which use Kilo-class submarines in warm winters.

When India showed reluctance to use these submarines in obvious deference to Iranian sensitivities, the Americans nearly called off the Indo-US naval exercise.

However, at the last minute, someone in the Indian defence establishment came up with a bright idea. India offered to press the Kilo-class submarines into use, provided the US Air Force agreed to take part in the exercise with the participation of PC-3 Orion aircraft.

Pakistan was at that time lobbying for the transfer of PC-3 Orion planes to its Air Force under the Brown Amendment and India was naturally keen to confront these planes in a combat situation so that it could be prepared for such an eventuality in a conflict with Pakistan.

Although the Pakistanis lodged a feeble protest with Washington, the Americans agreed to the Indian proposal and the exercise went off without further hitch. Other instances of Indo-US dispute over Iran have, however, not had such a happy ending. When Pranab

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Mukherjee made his first visit to Washington after appointment as external affairs minister, senior US officials put a lot of pressure on him to accept the Clinton Administration's view that Iran constituted a threat to the international community.

Wisely, Mr Mukherjee threw back at the Americans the very same arguments that US Assistant Secretary of State Robin Raphel and two successive US ambassadors to India, Thomas Pickering and Frank Wisner, have put before Indian officials while discussing Pakistan.

These three diplomats have told India at various times that it is useful for the US to have good relations with Pakistan because America can be a moderating influence on Islamabad.

Mr Mukherjee told US officials in Washington that India could exert a similar moderating influence on Iran.

Whenever India complained about Pakistan's complicity in promoting terror, the Americans maintained that there was inadequate proof of Islamabad being a terrorist state.

In Washington, when US officials complained that Iran was a terrorist state, the Indian minister put across the same argument — there wasn't enough evidence of Iran's role in exporting terrorism.

Mr Mukherjee may well have scored a Point with his American interlocutors But unfortunately, such innovation is not reflected in India's efforts to deepen and broaden New Delhi's relations with Teheran.

Prime Minister Mr Narasimha Rao is committed to an all-round improvement in ties with Iran. But some of his key advisers appear to harbour the erroneous belief that the inflow of dollars into India would be commensurate with any attempt on the part of India to slow down the process of improving relations with Iran.

Some time ago, Iran sought India's help in upgrading its radar system. Following instructions from these prime ministerial advisers, the Indian defence establishment dragged its feet on the Iranian request.

Fed up with India's ambivalence, Iran has now given the contract to a West European company.

India has been sitting on Iranian requests for spare parts for T- 72 tanks and for training facilities for personnel involved with the Kilo-class submarines.

India failed to respond on time even on an Iranian request last year for batteries for its submarines, which arrived from Russia equipped with batteries for use in cold waters.

Russia, China, or for that matter, allies of the US such as France and Germany, are all eyeing Iran's defence market.

Iran would like to buy at least some of its defence needs from India.

But the way India is responding to Iranian defence overtures, it may lose this lucrative market by default to competitors like Russia, China and Western Europe.

Indian Official Favors Kashmir Elections, Discusses Hostages

BK0402091996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The minister of state for home, Syed Sibte Razi, says the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is conducive to holding elections and the state administration is ready for that. He was talking to newspersons in Srinagar after reviewing the situation with civil, police, and paramilitary authorities. He said the center will go by the opinion of the political parties to achieve a consensus on the timing of the elections.

Referring to the unprovoked firing from across the border by Pakistan, he said India's retaliation has been restrained as it does not believe in such misadventures.

Our correspondent reports from Srinagar that the minister visited a number of areas in the city this morning, including the Hazratbal [shrine], to assess the ground realities.

Later addressing a news conference, Mr. Sibte Razi said all efforts are being made by the government to secure the safe release of four foreign nationals who were kidnapped from the Pahalgam area last year.

Indian Minister Concludes Talks With Parties on Kashmir Elections

BK0302165096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The two-day consultations of the union home minister with the state-level political parties on holding of elections in the state [Kashmir] concluded in New Delhi this evening. Briefing newsmen on the talks, Mr. Chavan said:

[Begin Chavan recording] Actually, I put before the political parties our intention of holding the elections in Jammu and Kashmir, and we wanted to consult them whether they are interested in giving us their assessment of the situation as to when these elections should be held. Different commutations and combinations are possible and they were made aware of the same. Some insisted that we have to hold the elections before the

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parliament elections; and others call for elections — both of parliament as well as assembly — after the parliament elections throughout the country; and the third was conditions are still not very ripe for holding the elections. I have to report to the prime minister and thereafter he will consider all aspects of the question [words indistinct]. [end recording]

He said those who are insisting on some kind of autonomy to the state before holding the assembly elections now seem to be of the opinion that this question can be addressed to only after the elections. He said the government may hold further discussions on the Kashmir issue with some of the central leaders. The home minister said that the government will also hold discussions with any other section in the state if they come forward for talks.

The home secretary, Mr. K. Padmanabhaia, said the center will again hold consultations with the Election Commission in the near future on holding of elections in Jammu and Kashmir in line with the Supreme Court's directive.

The minister of state for home, Syed Sibte Razi, has said that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir will improve further once the assembly elections are held. He said in Srinagar today that the center is trying to hold the elections in the next few months. He was addressing a meeting to condole the death of former MLC [member of the legislative council] Sheikh Ghulam Rasool, who was killed by militants a few days ago. Earlier, the minister reviewed the law and order situation in the state with senior civil and police officers.

India: Troops Said To Destroy House of Kashmiri Leader

BK0302114796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In occupied Kashmir, Indian troops destroyed the house of the Muslim Conference president, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Sumji, and extensively ransacked the house of the Liberation Front leader, Javed Ahamd Mir. The chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mir Waiz Omar Farooq, and a senior leader, Syed Ali Gilani, had expressed strong reactions against these repressive acts.

In other developments, two people were killed in custody in Gandarbal area and two freedom fighters were martyred in Akangam in District Islamabad. In retaliatory attacks by freedom fighters, two Indian soldiers were injured when a military vehicle was blasted in Srinagar.

India Orders Bail for Arms Dropping Suspects; Latvians Remanded

BK0302132196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chief metropolitan magistrate of Calcutta today ordered the release of four accused in Purulia arms dropping case on conditional bail. The accused granted conditional bail are Jitendra Malhan; his brother, Sushil Malhan; Harbhajan Lal Digga; and his son, Rajesh. However, the bail matter hearing of the accused Amarjit Singh, Onkarnath Gulati, and Ashoke was deferred till Wednesday. The other six Latvian crew members of the An-26 aircraft accused in the case were further remanded to jail custody till the 17th of this month.

Iran

Iranian Commentary Denies Reported Fire at Esfahan Nuclear Center

LD0202140096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The head of the Nuclear Technology Center [NTC] in Esfahan, Iran, has denied reports on the fire incident in the center aired by Radio Israel.

The false report was first printed in the Paris-based LE POINT daily and was then announced by Radio Israel's Persian service on January 30th.

The head of the NTC of Esfahan, Dr. Mahmud Kazem Rasuli, said no fire incident has ever occurred in the center during the post- revolution era.

It is not surprising that Radio Israel and LE POINT daily are spreading baseless reports against Iran. The daily, with a rightist inclination, had earlier played a considerable role in the unabated fight of world imperialism against Iran. Radio Israel, quoting the daily said: As a result of the fire in the NTC of Esfahan dark clouds covered the sky over the city, disrupting the flights from and to Esfahan Airport.

The fact is that there is no nuclear power plant in Esfahan to catch fire to cause the darkening of the sky. Regarding the adverse propaganda of the U.S. and Zionist regime against nuclear plants of Iran, the latest report by Radio Israel based on an article by LE POINT daily can be viewed as a new offensive against the peaceful use of nuclear technology by Iran. World imperialism media, led by [the] U.S. and Zionist regime, during the past year have repeatedly accused

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Iran of trying to have access to nuclear weapons to bar nuclear cooperation between Iran and Russia on the Bushehr power plant. All these efforts, however, remained futile. It seems now that the Zionist regime is resorting to spreading false news on the lack of safety that exists in the Iranian nuclear installations and the dire consequences of such a problem.

Now that the Zionist propaganda attempts have failed to reach its desired goal in its final phase, one can assume that in the long-run too the policy will face the same fate.

Iranian Paper Sees Dollar Forging Accusation as 'Propaganda Ploy'

LD0302123496 Tehran IRNA in English 1222 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 3, IRNA — A morning daily Saturday editorialized on the recent propaganda ploy the White House has waged against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The U.S. statesmen once in a while would resort to a new psychological warfare and accuse certain country or government of unfounded charges, wrote the Persian daily 'IRAN' today.

The editorial, 'forging dollar or forging fabrications?', further stressed that countries which have rejected having ties with the U.S. due to their national and ideological interests or their internal conditions have been labelled as terrorists and interventionists and are subjected to adverse propaganda.

The latest charge levelled against Iran by the U.S. Administration is forging U.S. dollars in order to deal a blow on Washington's economy, said the article. The masterminds behind the scheme know it well that to obtain the special paper for the banknotes of certain countries is almost impossible due to the tight guarantees provided by western companies in this respect, the paper said, adding that it is more possible for the Americans to obtain the papers required for the Iranian banknotes.

Iranian Commentary: U.S. Diplomacy in Bosnia on 'Verge of Collapse'

LD0302135796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 3 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Failure to carry out the essential articles of the Dayton peace accord, such as evacuation of occupied lands and release of POWs, has brought U.S. diplomacy in Bosnia on the verge of collapse. Former warring sides in Bosnia, despite America's threats over the full release of captives, are still keeping some POWs in detention. Earlier the U.S. Government had threatened should warring sides in Bosnia fail to release POWs until Friday February 2, Washington would reconsider its pledges of retraining the Bosnian Army and normalization of bilateral ties with Belgrade, as well as a boost of trade relations with Croatia.

The belligerent parties' failure to implement the main principles agreed upon in the Dayton agreement have made the U.S. Government send its Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the area on February 3. Beyond doubt the US official will once again use threats in a bid to force the former warring parties in Bosnia to comply with the content of the Dayton peace accord. It, however, does not seem likely that such threats could bring about a speedy release of all captives or any evacuation of the occupied areas. For covert, and at time overt, rivalries between U.S. and European government are still raging on and Russian and European efforts to combat America's ever-increasing clout in Bosnia have actually undermined the Dayton peace agreement.

Beside such competitions, Bosnian Serbs fear for the discovery of mass graves in lands under their control, has hindered the hand over of these lands to the Muslims by the Serbs. Of course this is not the only factor checking the evacuation of occupied lands by the Serbs. Bosnian Serbs regard the occupied areas as gains and achievements made during the Bosnian war, which they would not give up that easily. At any rate the provisions of the Dayton peace agreement pose a great threat to the establishment of peace in Bosnia and U.S. rivalries and European and Russian rivalries — each of which has entered the political arena in the Balkans — is pursuing its own aims to once again rekindle the flares of ethnic warfare in the strife-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Iranian Commentary: France Seeks Bigger Role in NATO; U.S. Opposed

LD0202182396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] French President Jacques Chirac met on Thursday, 1 February, with his American counterpart Bill Clinton, in the White House. The talks have reportedly centerd round the future of NATO and changing its structure, as well as spreading it to east and center of Europe, relations between America and Europe, and the Bosnian issue.

The main topic of dialogue is, however, the changing of NATO's structure. Jacques Chirac intends to create a balance in the commandship of NATO forces between the European states and America by changing NATO's

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structure. France's idea is to get a bigger role for Europe after the Cold War and emerging new developments. French officials believe that NATO is one of the permanent foundations for security in Europe, so the structure of the organization which has been formulated according to East-West bipolar system, should be altered. Now France is seeking a return to the military section of NATO which it left in 1966 on the condition that France is given a more active role. The U.S. apparently opposes offering bigger share of NATO leadership to provide security for the European countries. American officials believe that under the circumstances France is unable to guarantee the security of the continent. The officials also believe that France, due to its internal problems, is in no condition to play a major role on the security and stability of Europe.

Analysts believe that talks between French and American officials over reforming the structure of NATO are not so smooth since the local opinion and the pressure by the political groups inside America can be effective in this regard.

At any rate, the trip of Jacques Chirac to the U.S. after the controversial nuclear tests by France can be regarded as a new chapter in the U.S.-French relations. What makes these dialogues so important is that relations between Paris and Washington ever since the presidency of de Gaulle in 1966 had always involved suspicions and competitions.

Iran's Larijani on Changes in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain

LD0102230196 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1945 GMT 1 Feb 96

[Studio interview with Mohammad Javad Larijani, deputy head of the Majles Foreign Relations Committee, by unidentified announcer; date not given; from the "Political Roundtable" program — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted]

[Announcer] The developments in Saudi Arabia and the changes at the high echelons of that country have been simple ones. Anyway, how do you see the changes in that country?

[Larijani] I do not mean that the developments in Saudi Arabia are straightforward. After King Fahd's illness, naturally Saudi Arabia came to the point of important political change. In practice, power changed position from him to others who should take power. What is important in Saudi Arabia is that since almost three years ago the Americans gradually began to talk about the need for change in the Saudi Arabian situation. They went as far as to connect a wide spectrum of those opposing the government. Those [opponents] were even in contact with the U.S. ambassador in Riyadh. When the Saudi Government protested to America, the American ambassador declared such contacts to be completely normal.

What do they want in Saudi Arabia? I think there are two points to be taken up with this U.S. policy. One is that essentially what business is it of America whether the Saudi Government changes or not? We are not in a position to say whether that government should stay or not. The Saudi Arabian people are there; let them have any government they wish. But that definitely is no business of America. Therefore it is a totally illegitimate intervention and there is no justification for it.

A more important point is what do the Americans seek in Saudi Arabia; what if that government fails to satisfy them? I think it is the traditional fabric of the government that dissatisfies them. They believe that ...[pauses] I mean, after the developments in the world of Islam, particularly after the victory of the Islamic revolution, they came to the conclusion that if they have secular dictatorships they would be better than traditional rules, which might enjoy affection among the people. I believe America's theory to be that it should try to gradually create secular dictatorships in the southern Persian Gulf regional states. That, of course, is a dangerous theory that must mainly be implemented with Israel's activity in a wider role. Therefore the very theory of change the Americans pursue, beside being illegal, is most dangerous for the region. I believe that the American do not understand the regional issues at all, because Saudi Arabia will not change with such things. It has a normal and ancient power structure. Of course it can have new developments.

What ...[pauses] That was the external aspect of the changes. Of course within the state there are possibilities for change also. In the first place there are inadequacies of political-social structure; that is, both from the point of view of legitimacy and of efficiency. The existing structure does not satisfy the intellectuals, the educated and various strata of the people. It is not enough. Therefore they support more participation. I think there are many types of such participation in the form of elective assemblies, elective councils, and various elections. A large proportion of the young in that country have been educated: some abroad, some at university. That was not so before. Well, when they get an education and come into the community, naturally they need to be recognized, to be given scope, to be able to be joyful. There is no such scope, or the available scopes are not wide enough. The old, dynastic structure does not convince the people. Of course, I am not in

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a position to prescribe for Saudi Arabia, I am merely analyzing why there are grounds and a need for change.

The next point is the economic issue. The Saudi Arabian economy suffered a great blow after the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. That virtually changed the Saudi economy to one with difficulties. The Saudi money can be said to have been mostly spent. The Americans, one should say, plundered that money; that is, just like highwaymen, they took it away. Now, as to how and under what pretext: some for expenses of the military expedition, some for the expenses of the presence of the forces, and some for the sale of arms. I think that none of that will play a role in Saudi Arabia's security.

Most important of all are the American interventions; that is, the third element. After finding an arena to be present, America now is intervening in the internal affairs of the countries. Those interventions sometimes take the form of formation of opposition groups, sometime calling for a change of cabinet and sometimes ordering a certain thing to be done. No matter what government you think of, if a foreign element intervenes in its decision-making, sooner or later that government will lose its hold, it will no longer be balanced. That lack of balance creates unrest, creates dissatisfaction. That in brief is the image we have of Saudi Arabia. Change can be foreseen at the same time that the ground for change is not a very comfortable one.

[Announcer] Bearing in mind those developments, this question comes to mind: what is their effect in Saudi Arabia's relations with other countries, especially Iran?

[Larijani] Concerning relations with Iran, the natural requirement of the political situation is warm relations between Iran and those states. In those cases where relations are not warm, the foreign element is responsible. The tendency of our interests naturally demands that we be together. If we notice some disagreements, they are not through natural tendencies. I think that our relations with Saudi Arabia must naturally be warm. None of the existing disagreements, which have various histories, have been wanted by either state, none have been government policy.

[Announcer] In that case, were the statements made recently by the Saudi defense minister calling for the expansion of bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in line with that?

[Larijani] I noticed that statement in Saudi Arabian media. Of course it must be welcomed. In fact it is true to say that Iran and Saudi Arabia's relations must naturally be much better. We can have extensive economic cooperation, we can have extensive cooperation in oil, cultural cooperation, even have security cooperation in the region. We can assist the rest of our brethren in the region. It is the enemy that sows the seeds of doubt, suspicion, and enmity. In fact, I think what you've pointed out does not merely describe the Saudi side but also describes Iran's policy.

[Announcer] Mr. Larijani, Bahrain has been unsettled. What is the reason?

[Larijani] Bahrain's problems have their roots in three facts. In the first place is the political and social structure in Bahrain. There are more than half million local people, the majority of whom are shi'i. But because they are shi'i, the power structure does not allow them any participation. The shi'i make up the weaker and the more oppressed class. Power is locked in the hands of a small group. Nor is the government efficient in providing sufficient services such as employment for the people, so that even though the people might not have political power, they might at least have sufficient amount to eat. There is therefore a natural tendency for discontent with the social, political, and economic structures. Of course the extensive American presence there and the various interferences have prevented the government in creating any natural changes. For example, the Majles has been closed for about a year. Therefore developments in Bahrain have not found a more natural and a so-called non-violent path. People were forced onto the streets. Unrest reached an extensive level last year when about 20 people were killed. The unrests eased for a while but flared several weeks ago — and as they [Bahraini officials] have said — the unrests included an extensive wave of bombings. It was so extensive that the defense minister said that the army must get involved to bring the situation under control. Furthermore, regional countries announced support for the government in Bahrain. Egypt and the United States also used the opportunity well and opportunistically announced their support. These facts show that the problem was really serious. They have confessed that there were more than 80 cases of clashes within a week or 10 days. The reactions point to an unsettling disturbance for the government. The stances taken since also point out that they want to blame the events on foreign factors. Governments that bring in foreign elements in solving their domestic problems clearly intend to use suppression as solution to their problem. It should not come as a surprise that these events are being blamed on others. What I have said here is a general explanation for the domestic unrest in Bahrain.

[Announcer] Of course it is important that people's wishes should be taken into consideration. This issue might have a different effect in the domain of foreign

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policy, and Bahrain might follow a more balanced policy with regional countries.

[Larijani] Bahrain has even peculiar relations with the Arab countries of the region. For instance, after a 20-km bridge was built between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, there developed an extensive and unchallenged Saudi presence in Bahraini affairs. Bahraini relations with other countries in the regional are not that good. They are on the verge of war with Qatar. It is the same story with other countries. In fact their relations with Iran is much more settled, and it is clear where the propaganda about Iranian involvement is coming from. When the Egyptian Government says that the unrests have been caused by Iran, it is clear that they are trying to say that the government of Bahrain should fear Iran and, because it can not defend itself, it should pay the Egyptians to do so. This is therefore a form of blackmail by the Egyptians. Or if the U.S. deputy secretary comes to the region and blames Iran, it is simply because they want to portray Iran as an enemy and then say that the Americans must come to defend Bahrain and that there is a greater need to pay the Americans and that the Americans must be allowed more room in the region. I think our brothers in Bahrain know that their problem is not with Iran. Their problem is domestic. It is the same situation with Egypt. Mr. Husni Mubarak has been saying that the Iranians are the agitators. But we have been witnessing an massive and deeply popular movement of discontent in Egypt against the government. The two cases are similar. In one instance when the Egyptians were trying to prove that Iranians were interfering with their affairs, they said that Iran's Arabic radio was a source of agitation. In Bahrain they are saying the same things. I have to say that they are running away from the problem. It would be best for the government in Bahrain not to destroy its relations with its neighbors on the grounds of such suspicions. It should trust them. It should also solve its domestic problems wisely and through reliance on domestic factors. The government in Bahrain will face problems until it faces the real problem. This is not peculiar to the government in Bahrain. It is the same for all governments that fail to face their general domestic issues. I am sure that blaming Iran is a plot by those who want to loot Bahrain, those who want to interfere in Bahrain. Friends of Bahrain would never blame Iran. [passage omitted]

Iranian Dailies Say Bahrain Should Not Blame Unrest on Others

LD0302091896 Tehran IRNA in English 0706 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 3, IRNA — Two English morning dailies on Saturday commented on the recent unrests in Bahrain and Manama's attempts to blame them on external factors rather than the popular discontent.

'TEHRAN TIMES' commenting on the issue said that the recent problems in the country started in 1975 when the government dissolved the parliament.

"Any country which dissolves its parliament cannot be called a democracy. When a country has no parliament - that is, no representation of the people in an assembly - certain groups that want their voices heard protest by some other means."

The editorial added, "government's recourse to suppression will aggravate the situation in Bahrain as would the people's use of violent means in vindicating their fundamental rights."

TEHRAN TIMES concluded by cautioning that any unrest in the Persian Gulf is to the detriment of regional cooperation and development. "The government and people of Bahrain should try to settle the problem through peaceful means by grasping the roots of the problem."

On the same subject, the other English daily 'IRAN NEWS' compared the present situation in Bahrain to the pre-revolution Iran and the start of the popular uprising in Algeria. In both cases the familiar scapegoat, foreign elements and foreign powers, were blamed.

Following the popular uprising in the Iranian northwestern city of Tabriz in 1978, the toppled Shah's regime denounced it as a foreign-orchestrated movement and tried to suppress it brutally.

In the case of Algeria, added IRAN NEWS, Algerian dictators turned to blaming their own sins on Tehran.

However, baselessness of such claims have been proven to the whole world. "Despite the break in relations between Tehran and Algiers the popular and indigenous Algerian movement against the home-grown dictators continues successfully."

The editorial concluded, "Bahrain's rulers have no alternative but to put an end to their family's dictatorship and provide their citizens with at least a semblance of democracy, parliament or house of representation."

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Iran's Khamene'i Meets With Election Officials, Issues Guidelines

LD0302174296 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the exalted leader of the Islamic revolution, in a meeting with the members of the central and provincial Election Supervision Commissions, explained the importance of the elections in its various dimensions. [passage omitted]

Elaborating on the duties of the people and officials regarding the elections, the exalted leader said: The people are duty-bound to participate in the elections and vote for competent candidates based on theological, religious, and revolutionary criteria. They should send those to the Majles whom they deem to be closer to divine and revolutionary criteria, without regard to personal, ethnic, or tribal relations.

Khamene'i added: Those who are articulate, powerful writers and of good reputation should encourage the people to take part in the elections and explain this to them. They should also introduce proper individuals to the people. Of course in introducing such people, only religious relations and considerations must be taken into account instead of personal ties and friendship. In any case, the people must have their eyes open and know the individuals themselves. [passage omitted]

Referring to the need for the Guardian Council to be decisive in carrying out its responsibilities, the exalted leader of the revolution said: Once the Guardian Council reaches a decision on the issue of elections according to the law it must act decisively without standing on any ceremony or heeding any recommendations, and nothing should prevent that course of action.

The exalted leader described the Guardian Council as the guarantor of the religious trend of the system and, elaborating on the religious significance of this organ in the structure of the Islamic system, said: The Guardian Council — like some other phenomena, including the Constitution — enjoys a special status. That is because if it acts properly and correctly there will be no danger of the system deviating from religion. That cannot be compared to anything else. [passage omitted] The Guardian Council members, or those affiliated with the Council, must not do anything that might allow ill-wishers to insult the Council under the pretext of protest. Writers and speakers must realize that disrespect toward the Guardian Council cannot be tolerated. [passage omitted]

The exalted leader said: In supervising the elections, people's reputation and respect must be totally safeguarded. His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i enumerated the main criteria for the competence of Majles candidates as: commitment to the system, Islam, and the revolution, and that they endeavor to carry out their responsibilities and representational duties. He stressed: Those given to misappropriation and uncommitted to revolutionary mission and representational responsibilities must be prevented from entering the Majles. Reject all lovers of money, agents of feudal lords, and hooligans and those who seek to get into the Majles for financial and worldly matters by greasing people's palms. Of course no one should be accused of opposing the Velayat-e Faqih [Guardianship of the Jurisconsult] over the merest thing, such a the utterance of a remark, and be set aside through over-scrupulousness and narrow-mindedness.

He also expressed the hope for the Fifth Majles to be proper, clean, sound, and like earlier terms and for the people's true choice to find their way into the Majles. [passage omitted]

Jannati Discusses Majles Elections in Sermon

LD0202141096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0808 GMT 2 Feb 96

[Second sermon of Tehran Friday prayers by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, secretary of the Guardian Council — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

The topic of the day is the election issue. There is a lot to discuss on this issue, but time is short and I do not wish to keep you in the cold. The weather is cold and no doubt most of you are feeling cold. I, therefore, do not wish to keep you long on this cold day. However, it is necessary to discuss several points.

The objective of the elections is clear. The country's future destiny, in accordance with the regulations, is determined by the Majles. It is the Majles that endorses the president, ministers, members of the cabinet, and members of the executive branch. Well, the Majles, which plays such an important role, ratifies all the laws. It is the same laws that serve the interests of the state. And, God forbid, any mistakes lead to chaos. You now realize how important your vote is to elect the Majles deputies.

Here I would like to ask you to take part in the Majles elections. To take part is a divine, Islamic, national, and revolutionary duty. One should, therefore, not overlook or neglect this obligation [passage omitted]

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The issue of investigating the eligibility of the candidates is also highly significant. I know some individuals are questioning this point. Without an authority to discern whether a candidate is a competent, pious, and committed person or not, those with financial resources and ability to organize massive publicity campaign would find their way to the Majles. We need an authority capable of discerning these matters. Well, the task of investigating the eligibility of the candidates [performed by the Guardian Council] is truly a decisive process. It is a must, which determines the future of the state and the Majles. When probing into the records to ascertain eligibility of the candidates, we must make sure that the candidate has proven his practical commitment to Islam, loyalty to the Islamic Republic system, loyalty to the Vali-e Faqih [rule by a supreme leader or Guardian of the Cause], and all the principles accepted by all these people. A candidate has to rely on the vote of these people to enter the Majles. He should, therefore, accept the principles respected by the people.

We should not become complacent. Our fundamental principles and Constitution say the country's policy and the mode of operation of the three powers is that the Majles should be made up from the people's representatives. In other words, it is the people who should be present in this Majles. Of course, as one cannot fit 60 million people into the Majles, their representatives need to be sent to the chamber. These representatives then select the members of the executive power, and they in turn implement the laws made by the Majles.

This is the meaning of the rule of the people. This is the meaning of a Majles, which, due to the mandate it has received from the people, leads the arena. This trend must be safeguarded. In order to do so, we must make sure that certain people, God forbid, are not allowed to interfere in this field and change the course of things.

If, for instance — hypothetically speaking of course — governor generals, mayors, or other officials were to influence the elections in such a way that their own preferred candidates — and not the people's — would find their way into the Majles, then the government would be selecting the Majles, instead of the Majles selecting and endorsing the government. This is very dangerous, as it would constitute a return to the past, where in dictatorial regimes the governments always interfered in affairs and appointed the members of parliaments.

Praise be to God, we do not face this danger today. However, I say this as a warning lest something be carried out in some small place, which might set a precedent, and gradually develop into the situation that I just described. One must stop the process before it even starts, and one must be careful right at the start. [passage omitted]

God willing, the revolution is still alive and the cries of His Eminence Imam [Khomeyni], may he be admitted to God's paradise, still reverberate in our ears. We should in particular remember the Imam more frequently during the revolution anniversary celebrations, and we ought to hear his words and guidelines more often and more carefully.

His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i is strong, aware, and vigilant, and is carefully watching over everything. Our officials are also aware. Praise be to God, the revolution and its issues are still alive. However, we should not do something that might create some problem in the future, say in the next round of elections or the subsequent ones — a problem which in the future might simply prove unsolvable.

It is for this reason that we have said that we will confront any governor general or local official who wants to interfere in the election process. The Guardian Council is responsible for ensuring the correctness of the elections.

I would like to stress again that what I said was purely hypothetical. I did not mean to imply that such things happen in our country. I merely wanted to warn against such trends.

For my part, let me announce from this podium, and I have said this before: Let there not be backing for one particular person. Let there not be actions carried out to the benefit or detriment of any particular person or group. You must make sure that the law is implemented. Once the law has been implemented in deciding who is eligible, once this has been guaranteed, you leave the rest to the people. Do not think about who is coming or leaving. All you have to do is decide who is eligible. When you have decided this group of 10, 20, 100 or 1,000 people is eligible, then let it go. It does not concern you any longer.

Why do some people get excited and agitated, saying the Majles should be uniform? There is no need for this. If everyone thought exactly the same in the Majles, well this in itself could be considered as one of the Majles's faults. A variety of thoughts, tastes, votes, and logic should exist. However, they should all have the same aim and aspiration, they should all be facing Mecca [qiblah]. However, different people choose different paths. One says this path is closer, the other says the other path is closer, but they are all facing Mecca, they all want to reach Mecca. Once it is guaranteed that they are going toward the Ka'bah [Mecca] and not the

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opposite way, let them go that way. Some of them may be slow, others may be fast. Some may go during the night, others during the day. It does not matter. This is the good thing about the Majles — to have different thoughts, tastes, etc. This is a significant point that should not be forgotten.

One final point, and I apologize for keeping you, let me warn a certain group of people who want to buy the people's votes with money. This raises a lot of doubt. If a certain capitalist sent someone to the Majles with his money, that deputy would be the representative of the capitalist, not the people. If a smuggler were to back someone, that deputy would represent smugglers. If he himself has the money and starts spending it to get some votes, what guarantees are there that he would not repeat his deeds? What guarantees are there that he would not misuse his position?

Now is the time to pay attention to these issues. We have to be careful so this situation does not arise.

For God's sake, put enmity aside. Let there not be anyone sowing the seeds of discord. Hearts should be pure. It is the month of Ramadan — no-one should sow the seeds of discord during Ramadan. There must be no enmity — no-one should say bad things about others. Maintain a healthy spirit and God will maintain your health, soul, religion, and country. [passage omitted]

Iran's Nature of Election Participation Discussed

NC0302122796 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 24 Jan 96 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Election Ethics"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The election scene is getting livelier, something every section of our nation, every group and association, should welcome. A vibrant election arena shows the high level of popular enthusiasm and support for the system and the revolution. It also shows that the masses will go to the polling booths and participation will mount gradually, lending the elections greater excitement.

It is important for the forces of the revolution and for those who sincerely care about the system that the elections are healthy and inspire confidence, with masses of supporters, which should imbue the Islamic Republic of Iran's system with constancy and firmness and provide a repository of support for the fifth Majles term. Fortunately, this sentiment appears to be gaining ground; groups that until recently were not motivated to be present on the Majles election scene have entered the arena with immense zeal. The facts and figures show that more groups are waiving their ambivalence and disillusionment and are expected to soon be present on the scene, where their ledger will not be separate from that of the people, the revolution, and the system.

No one should forget that this bustling excitement is a bounty stemming from the sacrifices and blood of martyrs and the tribulations of the martyr-nurturing people. They gave up everything for the revolution to perpetuate the Islamic Republic of Iran's system to strengthen the revolution and let the system forge ahead on its path. The people should have the final say and if all the groups and associations have the same perspective and perceptions of the elections, canvassing will be done with wholesomeness and sincerity, away from narrow-mindedness and monopoly-seeking concepts.

Everyone should welcome the active participation of the various groups and factions and pave the way for more knowledgeable election activity so that the people can freely choose their own blooms from the various baskets and the fifth Majles can be composed of cohesive and balanced elements, each picked from among the revolutionary and dedicated believers in the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by the supreme jurisconsult].

We should value such a healthy electioneering atmosphere and should all perform our obligation to preserve this enthralling wholesomeness with all our being and ability.

The first point in this regard is that on principle we should seek the common denominators of concurrence, convergence, and unanimity of thought. It benefits the revolutionary forces that everyone should strive to safeguard the health of the elections and display restraint, patience, and tolerance. The first accepted principle of a code of "election ethics" is to advocate tolerance and kindness toward others.

Any monopolistic tendencies on the election scene are anachronistic in today's society. They poison the electioneering atmosphere and generate regret, which will be intolerable. Already we are hearing murmurings of such monopolistic aspirations from various quarters. So individuals and groups must correct their stances from the outset. Otherwise, the people will become disenchanted with them and these individuals will sustain greater losses than all the others.

One group considers itself the "symbol of the imam's line" and that the imam's line is the sole monopoly of that faction. It then uses this ploy to boycott the elections, saying the followers of the imam's line will not participate in the elections or its activities. This would be unacceptable and intolerable.

The imam's line is indicated by the people who are ever present on the scene and who are prepared to safeguard the greatest legacy of the late imam, that is,

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the revolution and the system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. They are prepared to generously lay down their lives for this and are not willing to tolerate the slightest laxity with regard to the revolution or the elections. Hence, allegations that the group of the imam's line is not proposing any candidate for the next Majles elections are unwarranted and smack of self-conceit.

The members of this group appear to want to distance themselves from the people by making such claims and wallowing in their own beliefs. They are deluding themselves that they alone are the followers of the imam's line, that is, just a handful of people!

Others have expressed doubts that the group calling itself "Kargozaran-e Nezam" [meaning employees of the system] do not have the right, even individually, to participate in the elections or to nominate a candidate. First, no list has been disseminated. These individuals cannot seem to tolerate the presence of the people on the scene and consider it illegal. Second, suppose there were some kind of ban, which does not exist. It is amazing that a group should make such claims, that is, that some cabinet ministers, self- professed members of this group, oppose other ministers being included in the list at the same time!

There is no doubt that a minister or official does not have the legal right to use his official resources or position to campaign for or against any candidate. But it is very monopolistic thinking for one group to consider itself authorized to do anything it wishes, while deeming the same "illegal" for others.

Regardless of these issues, which are unwarranted and should not be tolerated, all the people should feel that they can carry out free canvassing for their candidates and factions as long as they act within the Constitution and electoral laws and in a manner acceptable to society.

Everyone should tolerate the active presence of individuals, groups, and associations on the election scene. With patience and self-restraint they should abide by laws and regulations. If someone has some sincere remark or rightful objection, it should not be construed as being biased toward one or the other, as it would obviously be a cry from the heart and would have a ring of truth.

Iranian Education Minister Says Group of 16 Not Political Party

LD0302092496 Tehran IRNA in English 0841 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 3, IRNA — Education Minister Mohammad 'Ali Najafi stressed on Saturday that the group 16, which is composed of senior government officials, is far from being an organized political party.

The group at present lacks the necessary requisites to organize a party and there are basic issues that should be explored within the group to reach a consensus, he said in an interview with the English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES'.

The ministers who are members of the group will comply with President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani's call for executive officials to maintain impartiality in the upcoming polls, stated Najafi, adding other members will do nothing more than introduce eligible candidates for election.

Emphasizing that introducing candidates by no means constitute an interference in the voting process, he said, "if a minister abuses either his position or state facilities to campaign for a certain candidate, such an act will be interference in the elections."

If a candidate nominated by the group wins in the polls, this does not mean the person has been appointed by the executive branch, he said, underscoring that, "people are absolutely free to vote for their candidates."

The minister divulged that most of those active in the legislative and judiciary branches are members of different groups that introduce their own candidates.

Having a position in a government organization was not contradictory to membership in a group, he noted, stressing that such an affiliation was not tantamount to partiality or interference in the elections.

Najafi rejected any connection between the group 16 and the meeting of judiciary officials on January 29, wherein the chief of the state inspectorate organization was commissioned to probe into probable abuses of state facilities by public officials.

He further expounded that the three branches of government have implemented certain measures to prevent subordinate organs from interfering in the elections.

"To this end, the legislative power acts through the Guardian Council and its affiliated organ. The executive branch has also formed a special inspection team three months ago," he said, further stating the judiciary branch has taken a similar move in this direction with its inspectorate organization.

Najafi said enemy propaganda against the Islamic revolution aims to frustrate the people and discourage them from participating in the Majlis polls.

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Pakistan

Pakistani Defense Minister Rules Out Chance of War With India

BK0302162096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani has ruled out any possibility of war between Pakistan and India following Indian attacks along the Kashmir border. Talking to reporters in Mardan today, he said such attacks are merely an election tactic to satisfy the electorate. He said the rocket attack on forward Kahuta was even condemned by the Indian people. Talking to a delegation from the Mardan Press Club, Aftab Shaban Mirani said we will teach the enemy a lesson if war is thrust upon us.

He again extended an invitation for talks from the government to the opposition, saying this is the only way to settle their differences.

Army chief General Jahangir Karamat has expressed the hope that the armed forces will fulfill their responsibility in connection with national security. Addressing garrison officers in Lahore, he said we are aware of the threats to our country's security; the necessary arrangements have been made.

Pakistani Minister Warns of 'Countermeasures' to Indian Missile Test

BK0402154296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asid Ahmad Ali has said the Indian authorities are engaged in large-scale human rights violations to crush the freedom movement in occupied Kashmir. At a briefing for reporters in Lahore this evening, he said the recent rocket attack on forward Kahuta is part of an Indian policy aimed at distracting world attention from India's atrocities.

The foreign minister said India's Prithvi missile test will disturb the military balance, and Pakistan has the right to take countermeasures for its security. He said Pakistan will take all possible steps for its security, a right guaranteed under the UN Charter. He categorically stated that Pakistan, while remaining within the Missile Technology Control Regime, will develop its own missile systems for defense.

Pakistani Spokesman, Minister Voice Concern Over Indian Missiles

BK0302085796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Pakistan has expressed concern over reports that India will hand over the Prithvi surface-to-surface missile to its Army. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad yesterday that these reports are a matter of concern because arming the Indian Army with Prithvi missiles would be a threat to regional peace and stability and would escalate the arms race. The spokesman said Pakistan has drawn the international community's attention to these reports. It may be recalled that THE TIMES OF INDIA, citing senior defense officials, reported yesterday that the Prithvi missile, capable of carrying a one-ton conventional or nuclear warhead, will be handed over to the Army.

Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, federal minister for information and broadcasting, has said India's missile program is a matter of concern to Pakistan. Pakistan is making efforts to convince the world that India should be restrained from starting an arms race, with particular reference to its nuclear program. Speaking to reporters in Multan yesterday evening, he said India's missile program is a threat to the defense of this country and the entire region. Pakistan has always supported the ideology of peace, but contrary to this, India is playing an aggressive role. Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal said we are fully aware of the situation and our troops are always prepared to defend our territory.

Pakistan Extradites Saudi for Alleged Role in Blast at U.S. Office

NC0302101796 Paris AFP in English 0949 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Feb 3 (AFP)—Pakistan has extradited a Saudi national wanted for his alleged involvement in a deadly blast at U.S. military offices here, the interior ministry said Saturday [3 February].

A ministry spokesman said the suspect was being investigated. His repatriation and handover to Saudi security services were part of cooperation links between Islamabad and Riyadh.

Pakistani officials said Hassan A.H. Al-Sarai [name as received] was deported on Thursday and flown to Saudi Arabia in a special plane. He was arrested at his home in the suburbs of Lahore.

Al-Sarai, an Afghan war veteran, had been residing in Pakistan since 1990.

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His arrest was the first announced since the bombing, claimed by Islamic fundamentalist groups opposed to the deployment of US forces in the Saudi kingdom.

The November 13 blast ripped through a three-storey building which housed US offices used to train the Saudi national guard, killing seven people and wounding another 60.

The U.S. and Saudi authorities have offered large rewards, of two million dollars and 800,000 dollars respectively, for information on the perpetrators of the attack.

Pakistani Defense Minister Welcomes Passage of Brown Amendment

BK0202153296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 2 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani has said that the passage of Brown Amendment is a vindication of Pakistan's principled stand and has opened a new chapter in wider Pakistan-U.S. relations. In a statement in Rawalpindi today, the federal minister said this amendment would not only enable Pakistan to get back its military equipment, but would also create confidence on the part of U.S. traders about investing in Pakistan.

Pakistani Spokesman Speaks on F-16's, Mirage-2000 Aircraft

BK0302160296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has said Pakistan, time and again, has been insisting on the United States at the highest levels for supply of F-16 aircraft. He said in Islamabad today that during the visit of the prime minister to the United States in April last year and the president's earlier visit, Pakistan's position was made very clear. He said Pakistan has been maintaining clearly and publicly that equity and fairness demanded with the United States, either return the equipment we had paid for, or the money. [sentence as heard] He said President Clinton after his meeting with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had acknowledged the unfairness of the United States keeping both the money and the equipment. He, however, said that Pakistan's foreign minister's proposed visit to the United States is in the context of developments in Afghanistan and not related to the defense sales.

To a question, the spokesman said talks are underway for the supply of Mirage-2000 planes to Pakistan with the French manufacturers. He said it is wrong that France has refused to sell Mirage planes to Pakistan because of external pressure.

Pakistani Prime Minister Addresses Nation on Kashmir

BK0402145596 Islamabad PTV Television Network in Urdu 1335 GMT 4 Feb 96

[Address to the nation by Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto; place and date not given — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] My great countrymen: Peace be upon you. On 5 February every year, we observe a strike all over Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. Thus, the whole Pakistani nation expresses solidarity with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters, protests Indian oppression and tyranny, and exposes to the world India's illegal occupation. It was at this time last year that India promised it would hold elections in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. After one year, time has proved that India could not hold any elections. India's own Election Commission said it could not hold elections, and even after one year India is not in a position to curtail its 600,000 paramilitary and military forces. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference had announced in holy Mecca that it rejected elections and said that a solution could only be found through the right to self-determination. The announcement was made in May 1995.

From 1947 until today, there have been three wars between India and Pakistan in which Kashmir was either the direct or indirect cause. Pakistan was dismembered due to Indian aggression. India used to think that our resolve to support the Kashmiris would thus be weakened and we would refrain from supporting the Kashmiris, but Indian aggression could not weaken our determination. Muslims always fight for righteousness and justice. In no way can we deviate from supporting the Kashmiris' struggle for freedom. We cannot flinch from the Kashmiris' struggle for freedom.

The establishment of Pakistan was also the outcome of a struggle for freedom. People struggling for freedom always achieve victory. Oppression and violence do not last forever. The night of oppression eventually ends, giving way to the rising sun of freedom. The struggle for the independence of Palestine could not be terminated despite three wars. Eventually, Israel had to accept the path of negotiations. It was forced to sit at the table and hold talks and negotiations on Palestinian rights. Despite its atrocities and oppression, the white minority government in South Africa could not last long. The Muslim majority in Kashmir will achieve success the way the black majority in South Africa achieved success. Recently, the Serbs reached new heights in carrying out oppression and violence against the Bosnian Muslims. Despite this, they could not succeed in their objective. Thousands of Bosnian

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Muslims were martyred, but the Serbs were eventually forced to sign a peace agreement.

The blood of the Kashmiri mojahedin and martyrs will not be in vain. We believe the cries and moans of the Kashmiri mothers will not be in vain, and the blood of the Kashmiri youth will yield results. We believe the children of the Kashmiri martyrs will gain freedom. We believe the elements of oppression and barbarism in Kashmir will be defeated. A day will come when the Kashmiris will live with respect and dignity in an atmosphere of freedom. This is the eternal lesson history teaches. Truth always achieves victory, and the Kashmiris will meet with victory and success. The whole Pakistani nation is with the Kashmiris in their struggle for freedom. Every Pakistani man, woman, and child is with their Kashmiri brethren and will remain so to the last moment.

Pakistan has always supported those fighting for freedom. We helped the Algerian fighters when they were engaged in a struggle against colonialism. We helped the Tunisian freedom fighters when they were fighting a holy war against colonialism. We have helped all those who fought for their freedom. We have seen freedom fighters crowned with success. God willing, we will also see the Kashmiri people crowned with success.

What are the demands of the Kashmiri people? They only want the Kashmir issue settled in accordance with international law. They want the right to self-determination. Pakistan is willing to settle the Kashmir dispute [preceding word in English] through negotiations in accordance with international law, but India is not willing to do this. India's claim of secularism was exposed following the attack on the Golden Temple and the destruction of the Babri Mosque. After the siege of Hazratbal shrine, Charar Sharif was set on fire. Who can forget the desecration of this holy place? Instead of negotiating, India laid siege to Hazratbal shrine. India's actions are neither dispassionate nor based on sobriety or logic.

The Pakistani president went to India recently to attend the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit. He made it clear to India that Pakistan is willing to enter into a dialogue on the Kashmir dispute [preceding word in English]. Unfortunately, India refused to hold negotiations, even though it does not have a solution to the Kashmir issue. The solution to the Kashmir issue lies with the Kashmiri people.

India has been unable to hold elections in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Even if India holds elections in occupied Jammu and Kahsmir, it will not solve the problem. Rigged elections never solve problems. In fact, rigged elections will further aggravate the problem. The intensification of the struggle in occupied Jammu and Kashmir took place as a result of the rigged elections in 1987. Peace in the subcontinent can only be established through a plebiscite in Kashmir and not through so-called elections. Even [Indian National Conference leader] Farooq Abdullah has refused to participate in these so-called elections. The Kashmiri people will never accept elections under the Indian bayonet.

Recently, reports circulated that India was preparing for one more nuclear explosion. Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao has said that India will not give up the nuclear option. On 27 January, India test fired a Prithvi missile. A day earlier, on 26 January, India fired rockets on forward Kahuta. A mosque came under their rocket attack. Worshipers were martyred. Children were martyred. India's language of weapons reflects its frustrations. A major reason for India's war hysteria is the failure of its designs in connection with the Kashmir issue. Pakistan is aware of India's designs. India knows that if it creates a situation, Pakistan is capable of countering it under any circumstances and on any front.

My dear countrymen, we will not be cowed down by India's provocative acts. The world should know it is India that is test firing missiles and even wants to manufacture long-range [preceding word in English] missiles. These long-range missiles could reach Tehran, Baghdad, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, or Cairo. There is no limit to India's designs. India has interfered in all its neighboring countries. It has interfered in Bangladesh affairs on the Farakka barrage issue. Nepal, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan have been victims of Indian interference on one issue or another. India is now trying to interfere in one part of Pakistan. To achieve this objective, it has established training camps for subversive activities against Pakistan. With God's mercy, however, the people and armed forces of Pakistan are fully capable of meeting any type of aggression. We will never accept Indian hegemony.

During the past two years, a few significant events have taken place at the international level on the Kashmir issue. The Islamic foreign ministers conference was held in Islamabad on 9 September 1994. This conference established a contact group on the Kashmir issue. This was an historic event.

During the Islamic summit conference in Casablanca, Kashmiri leaders addressed the contact group. The Casablanca conference issued a declaration calling for the resolution of the Kashmir problem according to the UN resolutions. It was the first time since 1947 that the Muslim countries adopted such a resolution unanimously at the summit level. Earlier, during the

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people's government in 1988-90, the Islamic foreign ministers adopted a similar unanimous resolution on the Kashmir issue.

Veteran politician Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan has played a very important role in creating a national consensus on the Kashmir issue. An all-parties joint declaration was signed under his guidance. The declaration has been signed by the leader of the house, the leader of the opposition, and all political parties. The declaration has proved that the entire Pakistani nation is united and will remain united on the question of Jammu and Kashmir.

In my address on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, I informed the international community that 48 years of oppression has not been able to crush the spirit of freedom of the Kashmiri people. You should open your hearts, minds, and ears so you can hear the voice of tyranny, because it is said that closing your eyes to crime is not innocence but a sin. You may recall that the nonaligned summit conference was also held this year. Speaking from this platform, I said the people of Jammu and Kashmir are passing through a long night of oppression and tyranny — 40,000 people have been killed, countless women have been dishonored, and several children have been abducted. In spite of this oppression, the candle of freedom is burning in the hearts of the Kashmiri people.

The Kashmiri people achieved a major success at the international level when a lobby was organized in the British Parliament in July 1995 in which several members of the British Parliament participated. That meeting also expressed support for the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people and strongly condemned Indian atrocities. On 29 November 1995, the European Parliament also organized a lobby in Brussels that was attended by several parliamentarians from several European countries. The speakers condemned India's tyrannical attitude and human rights violations.

A regrettable incident took place in occupied Jammu and Kashmir last year when the so-called Al-Faran group abducted some tourists. We do not know whether this group comprises agents of the Indian secret agencies or a lone group of Kashmiri freedom fighters. This irresponsible abduction incident has affected the Kashmiri movement. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has strongly condemned this incident. We have also strongly condemned it. This is the holy month of Ramadan, a month for forgiveness and noble deeds. It is our faith that one noble deed done in this month brings manifold rewards. If the kidnappers of these tourists have any love for Kashmir, I urge them to release these innocent people.

Dear countrymen, the Cold War has become part of history. We are now talking of a new international order. This order should be based on the universally accepted principles of justice. It is not in keeping with the principles of justice to resolve certain problems and ignore others. Any discrimination in the dispensation of justice is impossible. A just settlement of the Kashmir problem is the only test of the new international order. A solution to the Kashmir problem is the imperative need of the hour; an important requirement of the new international order. As long as the reign of terror and oppression exists there, there can be no real peace and stability in the Indian Subcontinent. The solution of the Kashmir problem can guarantee peace for the Indian Subcontinent into the 21st century. We believe in peace. We will support the Kashmiris in their struggle so as to establish peace in the Indian Subcontinent.

A general strike will be observed all over Pakistan and Azad Kashmir tomorrow. The Pakistani people will participate in protest demonstrations and rallies to express their solidarity with the Kashmiri people and express their determination before the world. We are on the side of the Kashmiris and will continue to be so to our last breath. Victory always kisses the feet of those who are imbued with the spirit of freedom.

Victory will be ours. The Kashmiri people will be victorious. Long Live Pakistan!

Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan President Stresses 'Democratic Society' on National Day

BK0402114096 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In a national day message, President Chandrika Kumaratunga says that the people have laid a strong foundation for a comprehensive civil democratic society in Sri Lanka over the past one and half years. This has been the greatest victory during this period. The shadow of authoritarianism which was cast over society by political terror has been eradicated. The government's endeavors to create an atmosphere in which people can live without fear have been largely accomplished.

The president pointed out that her government not only brought an end to the cult of violence and terror but also proceeded to deal with bribery and corruption. Having dealt with this menace, it also took measures to put the open economy back on track. Draft legislation for the devolution of power has already been presented to political parties and the public. This legislation is

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not aimed merely at solving the ethnic problem; it is also a bid to consolidate democratic freedom in the country and to secure the people's participation in the administration.

The president said that all Sri Lankans should dedicate themselves to the task of laying a permanent foundation for a democratic society which would guarantee political rights, social justice, and economic freedom free of exploitation.

LTTE Dispatch Reports Bomb Attack in Sri Lanka; No Responsibility Claim

BK0402064496 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 31 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A massive bomb attack took place in the heart of Colombo today. This attack was carried out in the heavy security area in Colombo. It has been reported that the attack was executed by ramming an explosive-laden vehicle into the Central Bank building. Reports say that three people who entered the area around 1100 opened fire in the air, causing people to run helter skelter. Then they attacked the buildings in the vicinity with rocket launchers. Thereafter they rammed the explosive-laden vehicle into the bank building.

Most of the buildings in the vicinity have been heavily damaged. A few big buildings have been completely gutted. Available reports say that buildings that caught fire at 1100 were burning until 1700. A large number of buildings in surrounding areas were badly damaged by the shock waves caused by the bomb blast, which jolted the entire Colombo area. The first big building in Sri Lanka, located in front of the Central Bank [words indistinct]. The 13-story Ceylinco House head office building, Indian Overseas Bank, Air Lanka suboffice, [words indistinct] air services offices were also badly damaged. A number of multistory buildings housing several offices were completely gutted. The 33-story building housing the Bank of Ceylon was also heavily damaged.

It has been reported that 55 bodies of those killed in the bomb attack have been recovered so far and that 1,400 injured people have been admitted to hospitals. It has also been reported that hundreds of others inside the buildings may have been killed and that rescue operations inside the collapsed and gutted buildings will resume tomorrow morning. This is regarded as the biggest-ever bomb attack in the history of Sri Lanka. It has also been reported that the loss of life and property is unprecedented. It should be noted that the locality where the bomb attack took place is within a few hundred yards of the residence of Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga and in close proximity to the headquarters of the Sri Lankan Navy.

The Sri Lankan Government is shell-shocked, as this attack took place in the high security area as well as the economic nerve center of Sri Lanka. A high-level in-camera meeting attended by President Chandrika Kumaratunga, Deputy Defense Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte, and commanders of the three armed forces was held today to discuss future security measures. This attack has caused a very great financial crisis for the Sri Lankan Government.

Reporting on this attack, which has raised questions about the security measures undertaken by Sri Lankan Government troops, the BBC Colombo correspondent reported that because a large number of troops have been concentrated in the north, the Sri Lankan Government can not protect the east or Colombo. It should be noted that although presumptions and speculation have been aired by various people in different ways about this attack, no one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The thirst of the LTTE is the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thanks.

LTTE Unconfirmed Report: 'Ellalan Force' Caused Blast in Sri Lanka

BK0302134496 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 1 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The casualties in yesterday's bomb attack at downtown Colombo that caused extensive damage have increased. An international news agency has reported that so far 92 bodies have been retrieved from the debris and flames. Sri Lankan police officials have stated that the casualty figures may go up, as the rescue operations are still continuing. Hospitals in Colombo are overflowing with injured people. Leave of absence for doctors and other employees has been canceled and they have been asked to report for duty. Meanwhile, a call for blood donations has also been made. There has been no report on the economic loss suffered by the Sri Lankan Government in the bomb attack. However, correspondents from Colombo say that the Sri Lankan Government is facing a very great financial crisis due to this bomb attack. An international magazine has reported that this attack will directly affect foreign investment and the tourism industry.

In the meantime, an unconfirmed report says that the Ellalan Force [a militant group] has claimed responsibility for the bomb attack.

Foreign news agencies are giving wide coverage to the bomb blast that occurred in Colombo. Reporting the bomb blast, THE TIMES published from London has

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pointed out that the Sri Lankan Government's stance on 'peace through war' is impractical and that the failure of Chandrika Kumaratunga's plan has now been revealed. Pointing out the setback to the victory in Jaffna, an article published in that paper says the war has moved from backward and economically unimportant Jaffna to Colombo, and it has widened the gap between the Tamil and Sinhala communities. Citing the recent military action on Jaffna carried out by the Sri Lankan Government, the paper has pointed out that 350,000 displaced people are jobless, homeless, and starving as well as consumed with anger. The paper also notes that the people are angry with Sinhalese President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who first gave them hope and then hoodwinked them. Pointing out the progovernment stance of other Tamil groups, the paper has also stated that only the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] are fit to speak for the Tamils.

A [word indistinct] girl called Balendrarasa Kayalvizhi from Uduppiddi was killed in the brutal missile attack launched by Sri Lankan troops from Palali military camp around 1300 yesterday afternoon. Four more people were injured in Kambarmalai, Uduppiddi, and Tondaimanar localities.

Tondaimanar temple and the building for disciples have been damaged in the missile attack launched from Palali military camp on Thursday [25 January] last week. Two brothers sleeping inside the building were seriously injured. A nine-year old boy called Vijayaraja Vijindan was injured at Alampil Chemmalai locality when the Sri Lankan Army carried out a missile attack on Mullaitivu during the early hours of 30 January last. In this attack, a number of houses were damaged in Chemmalai.

Freedom fighter Lieutenant Natesan, who was wounded in the accidental bomb blast on 25 January embraced martyrdom on 28 January. Our tributes go to that Valiant Tiger, who sacrificed his life for the cause of the liberation of our motherland.

The thirst of the LTTE is the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thank you.

Sri Lankan 'Police Sources' Implicate LTTE Figure in Bomb Attack

BK0302110996 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 3 Feb 96

[Report by Pramod de Silva and Kamani Alwis — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sleuths probing Wednesday's [31 January] bomb attack on the Central Bank building have established that LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] top runger Suresh planned their attack and briefed the suicide team on several occasions, police sources said.

Raghu and Kutti, the two LTTE suspects taken into custody soon after the incident with the help of the public have told investigators that Suresh, a LTTE weapons and explosives training expert, briefed them and Raju the suicide bomber cum lorry driver on the attack on Wednesday morning. His whereabouts are not known at the moment.

It has been revealed that Suresh had conducted several rehearsals of the attack in Jaffna and trained the threesome in handling firearms and explosives. He also trained a LTTE cadre known as Nadan, but he could not come to Colombo. Suresh is known to visit Colombo occasionally to brief LTTE cadres living in the City.

Police are now investigating whether the explosives had been fitted to the lorry in Vavuniya or in Colombo. A special team of detectives are now in Vavuniya to investigate this matter.

The task of triggering the explosion had been entrusted to Raghu (Subramanium Vigneshwaran alias Ramesh), Kutti (Sivasmi Dharmaruba alias Vigneshwaran) and Raju.

As the lorry approached the Bank, Raghu and Kutti jumped off and started shooting all around. One of them fixed an explosive device on the iron railings of the front entrance and blasted it instantly. The other was already in a three wheeler and as the lorry rammed into the front entrance, he too got into it.

They were apprehended in Pettah by the public while trying to escape.

Meanwhile, the death toll from the massive explosion climbed to 79 yesterday as two more bodies buried under the rubble were found. Fifty seven bodies have so far been identified by relatives.

Security forces personnel were clearing the rubble, looking for more bodies. They said the chances of finding any survivors at this stage were extremely remote.

General Hospital sources said 270 blast victims still remained warded. Thirty of them were in a critical condition, with 16 under intensive care.

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Sri Lankan Minister: Bombing Shows Need To Defeat LTTE

BK0302113496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 3 Feb 96

[Report by T.Sabaratnam — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government will intensify its military campaign and its effort at finding a political solution as a response to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's [LTTE] bomb blast on Wednesday [31 January], government spokesman Justice Minister G.L. Peiris said.

Giving the government's political response at the weekly press briefing, Prof. Peiris said: "The government's view is that the calamity has underlined the paramount need to defeat the LTTE".

He said to defeat the LTTE the Tamil community should be weaned away from it and that requires a coherent and properly integrated strategy.

"Military action will be intensified and continued in the northern and eastern provinces. The government is committed to this", he said.

If the LTTE is to be defeated, there should be a vigorous political strategy which offers justice and fairplay to the Tamil people, he said.

"The Tamil-speaking people must have their aspirations fulfilled. They must live in equality with the Sinhalese and the Muslims. It is only then that the Tamil people can reject the LTTE and enter the political mainstream", he said.

Prof. Peiris added: "We also think that making the Tamil people reject the LTTE will be a greater victory than the fall of Jaffna".

The new constitution and the devolution proposals are intended to achieve that objective, he said.

Prof. Peiris said the LTTE would employ every action to defeat the government's political initiative and added that the people should not fall into the LTTE's trap.

Sri Lankan Government Appoints Team To Rebuild Bombed Area

BK0302120796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 3 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has appointed a high- powered team to rebuild the bombed financial hub, pay compensation, and provide temporary accommodation to businesses wrecked by the bomb attack. Power and Energy Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte says that the government would arrange alternative office space for banks, international airlines, and other commercial establishments as an immediate measure. It will get the basic facilities such as electricity and telephones organized immediately. The minister said that they wanted to reconstruct and rebuild the city center soon. Col. Ratwatte, who is also the deputy defense minister, said that the president has agreed to pay compensation to those not adequately covered by insurance. A presidential task force for reconstruction has been appointed. It will speedily carry out the work. The minister said that it would include senior bureaucrats from the president's office and city planners.

Sri Lanka: Bomb Recovery Continues; Additional Suspects Detained

BK0402121596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 4 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A team of expert engineers say that the Central Bank building, which was badly damaged in Wednesday's [31 January] LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] bomb attack, can be renovated. The engineers who inspected the damage have handed in their report to the Central Bank governor, A.S. Jayewardene. The governor says that reconstruction work will begin as soon as the estimates are approved.

Preliminary measures to restore the Central Bank services have already been taken. Check clearing resumed at the headquarters building in Fort on Friday. Around 5,000 million rupees worth of checks are cleared every day. Foreign transactions have also resumed. Mr. Jayewardene says that several measures have been taken to ensure that economy does not face a cash crisis. The Central Bank's cash reserves are being maintained with the assistance of the Bank of Ceylon and with the People's Bank. All documents and equipment have been transferred from the bank headquarters in Fort to its staff training college nearby.

Meanwhile, the governor says that four bank employees are still missing after the bomb attack. Their bodies are believed to be among the debris of the headquarters building. Rescue workers will try to recover them after the engineers give them the go ahead to enter the still uncleared part of the building. The owners of other financial institutions and offices which were ravaged in the attack are also beginning to undertake salvage operation. They have been granted permission to clear away the rubble from the blast. Police say that all these buildings have been searched for the remains of victims.

Police sources also report that several more suspects have been taken into custody in connection with the attack. Further investigations are continuing. A senior

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police officer says that Janadhipati Mawatha area can be cleared of the debris from the blast in the next few days. He also said that no bodies were discovered during yesterday's search operation.

Sri Lankan Government Troops Reportedly Kill 15 LTTE Members in Jaffna

BK0202092396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 2 Feb 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] About 20 Tiger cadres are believed to have been killed in confrontations with the security forces during the past week.

About 15 Tiger cadres attempting to sneak back into the Jaffna town area via the lagoon are believed to have been killed in a confrontation with the navy and in artillery fire last Saturday [27 January] while five more were shot dead in north eastern Trincomalee district on Wednesday.

According to military sources, in the first incident last week, two naval crafts had engaged two LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] boats in the Jaffna lagoon around dusk on Saturday. As the naval crafts gave chase, the rebels numbering about 15, in the two boats had beached at the tiny and uninhabited Pavarasantivu island close to the Jaffna town.

Naval gun fire had led to two of the rebels being killed and the destruction of their boats while artillery fire directed at the island by the army is believed to have accounted for the rest of the LTTE cadres.

In separate incidents on Wednesday, a military patrol shot dead three LTTE cadres south of Trincomalee during a confrontation. Two more, believed to be members of an LTTE pistol gang engaged in eliminating rivals and suspected informers, were also shot dead by the army during a cordon and search operation in Trincomalee town area. A pistol too was recovered.

LTTE Claims Victory Over Sri Lankan Government Troops in East

BK0202092496 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in English 30 Jan 96

["Press Release" from LTTE Political Committee in London on 30 Jan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] After 20 minutes of heavy fighting Sri Lankan army camp at the 10th mile post Pulmoddai in the Eastern province was completely annihilated by LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] forces. Pulmoddai 10th mile post army camp in Trincomalee was completely wiped out by LTTE forces on Sunday night at 11.55 p.m. (28-01-96). After twenty minutes of heavy fighting the camp fell into the hands of the LTTE. After capturing military equipments, the camp was completely destroyed.

Unable to face this severe attack, the army fled away carrying with them the injured soldiers. It should be noted that this camp was erected after chasing away the Tamils from Thennamarawadi area in 1993. LTTE forces captured military equipments after bringing the army camp under control, then demolished the generators and camp buildings. 14 soldiers including an officer were killed and many injured soldiers ran away. There is no casualties in LTTE. According to military sources the fierce battle went on for four hours and women LTTE fighters were also engaged in this fighting. They further stated, only three soldiers were wounded and they are being treated at Anuradhapuram hospital.

Daring Attack on Patrol Unit at Mankindimalai by LTTE Forces

Three soldiers died and several injured from a patrol unit during the attack by LTTE forces, about 1000 metres from Mankindimalai army camp in Mullaitivu district. 3 army personnel died in this attack. LTTE also attacked another army unit which came from Mankindimalai to support this unit. No further information available regarding this.

Three S.T.F (Special Task Forces) Including a Sub-Inspector Died

In a confrontation with the S.T.F in Amparai district with LTTE, 3 policemen including a sub-inspector were killed. An S.T.F patrol unit with a 'Buffle' armoured vehicle encountered the LTTE on Pamagama Pottuvil road at Sastheriveli on Monday at 8.05 a.m. (29- 01-96). One S.T.F. person died on the spot. Another unit of S.T.F. from Aruhambai which came with a 'Buffle' armoured vehicle in support, was also attacked by the LTTE, and they retreated with heavy losses.

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